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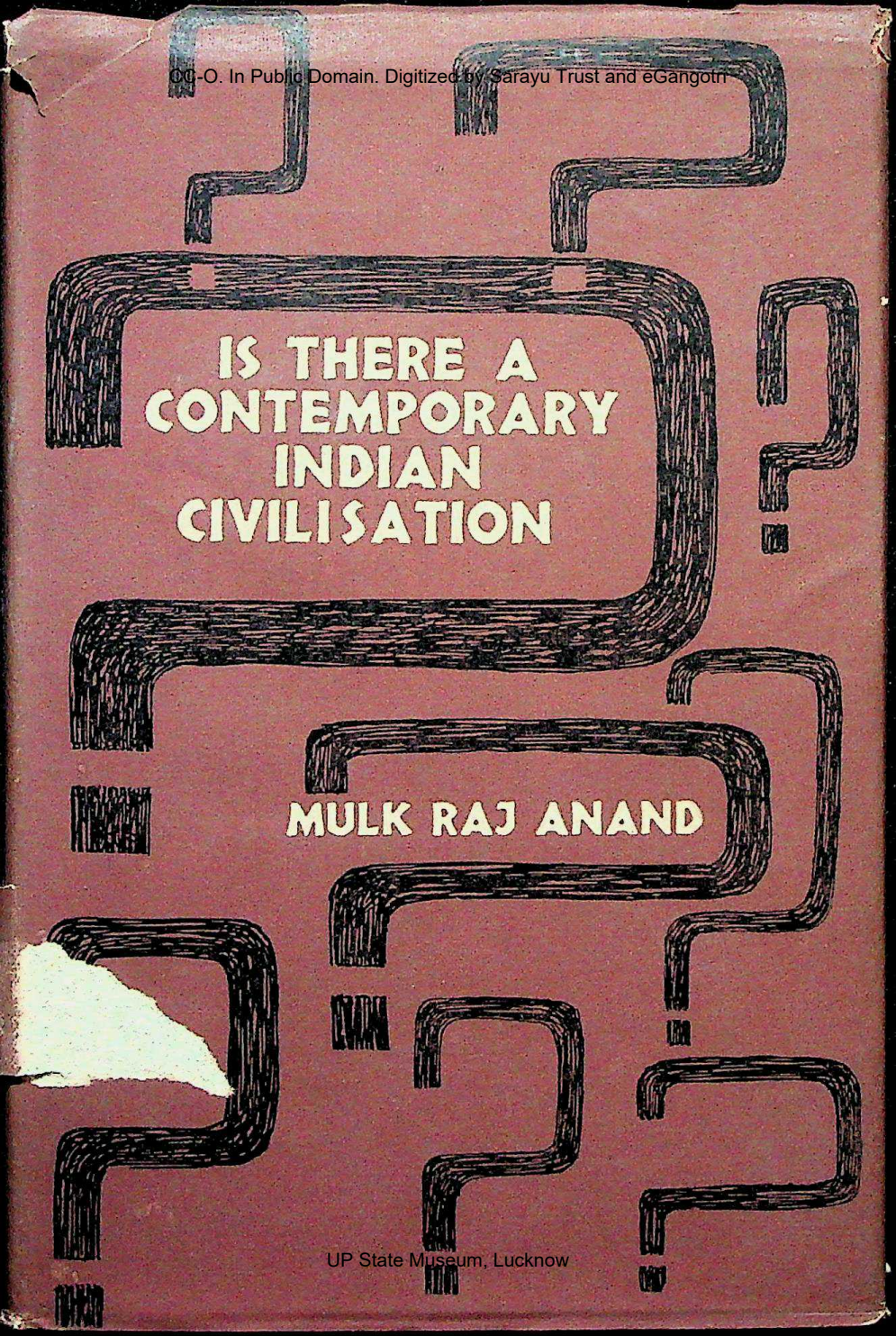

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KNOW

THIS LITTLE book has grown out of the confrontations between Eastern and Western thinkers, arranged by the UNESCO in its major project for the Mutual Appreciation of the Values of East and West. As a participant in the discussions on this theme, Dr. Anand felt compelled to question the fundamental postulates of both the Indian and Western orthodox philosophers. He rejects the superficial hypothesis that India is 'spiritual' and the West is 'material'. And he ventures into the hitherto undiscovered areas of actual belief, which lie behind the fabric of Indian civilisation. Further, he tries to find out to what extent, if at all, traditional values are genuinely held by the intelligentsia, and where lies the hiatus between the brave declarations and the relevant facts. As a constructive part of his effort to understand the contemporary situation, he offers humanism as the basic contemporary philosophy of India, which sustains the policies of dynamic neutralism and non-alignment.

(*See also back flap*)

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IS THERE A CONTEMPORARY INDIAN CIVILISATION?

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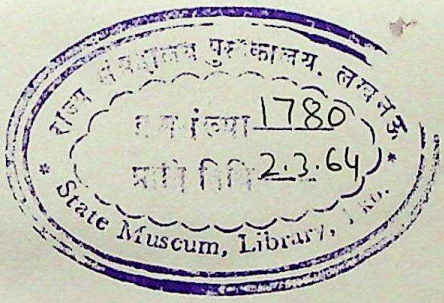
IS THERE A CONTEMPORARY INDIAN CIVILISATION?

MULK RAJ ANAND



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PREFACE

THIS LITTLE BOOK HAS GROWN OUT OF MY participation in the seminar on 'Traditional Values in India' conducted under the UNESCO scheme for dialogues between East and West.

I found that the majority of the eminent philosophers and publicmen, who contributed to that discussion in Delhi, seemed still to pose the concept of a 'Spiritualist' East as against a 'Materialist' West. So, with Dr. Tara Chand, Professor Humayun Kabir and a few others, I found myself questioning whether the old philosophies of India, which were certainly dominantly idealistic, were valid among our people, today, when a 'Socialist Pattern of Society', a secular democracy based on a parliamentary system, and a planned economy, are operating in our midst. Also, whether it was not necessary to look the gift horse of the profit-centred, machine-ridden, aggressive Western civilisation in the mouth at the same time as we accept the important values of the West. I asked what kind of values we really had in the past or have now, and whether we want a death-giving routine civilisation or a creative civilisation in which man is not divided from man, culture from culture, continent from continent, but progresses, through genuine expression of his talent and satisfaction of his daily needs, with mutual aid, into becoming a whole man. Curiously, C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, himself an old philosopher, who presided over the seminar, was just enough to pass me a note, after my exposition, complimenting me 'on the shower bath' I had administered, 'or rather on the needle bath', as he put it. I must confess that I was

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encouraged, because I had felt myself a comparatively innocent lamb bleating in a den of roaring lions.

Since then I have enlarged my comments and given the necessary historical background to show that even the few traditional values, Universalism, Tolerance and Compassion, which might once have moulded the behaviour of the Indian people, are more valid in their assertion by our leaderships than they are in actual practice, even by the official intelligentsia. I do not deny that we wish them to be operative, and have probably succeeded, to some extent, in infusing them into our political and social policies. But I doubt if a very large number of people really believe in them and practice them, because of the rigours of over two hundred years of Imperialist rule through which we have passed, and the personal greed, selfishness and lack of values promoted by the dominant tiger economy of the Western kind accepted by us *ad hoc* after the attainment of freedom, in spite of the proclaimed ideal of the Socialist Pattern of Society. Our caste bias, linguistic chauvinism and small state-mindedness are no less divisive.

I have suggested that in order to give a deeper and moral real basis to democratic socialism we might sign a minimum manifesto for a broadbased Indian humanism, which is implicit in our contemporary emphasis on 'Destination Man' and the methods of self-giving as against self-withholding. If the ancient philosophies will not answer to our problems, nor will eclecticism.

Since the UNESCO seminar, this essay has appeared, in an enlarged form, in *Comprendre*, Volume 20, as part of a Dialogue on India.

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I have rewritten the whole as a book and sent it to press, so that it may serve as a basis for discussion. I am conscious that I may have erred on the moot points by overstatement of the humanist point of view, in a society which still tends to pose every question simply in terms of power, religion, money, caste and language, or as an issue between the yogi and the commissar. The tentativeness of my approach is implied in the question mark of the title.

Khandala
August, 1962 M.R.A.

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PRELIMINARY

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT INDIA OCCUPIES A somewhat unique position in the world today. Actually, it is connected by airways and steamships with the main continents of the shrinking globe, so that one can travel, in a few hours, to and from it. It is governed by a parliamentary democracy, combined with a planned economy of industrial and agrarian development, approximating to a 'socialist pattern of society'. And yet even a cursory look at its cities, towns and villages reveals the survival, on its almost continental landscape, of different peoples, with varied outlooks, different social and mental habits, dressed in all kinds of outer habiliments. And if one penetrates further into the heart and mind of its people, one finds that the vast majority of them hold to certain values of its remote or recent past, while the forces of the second world Industrial Revolution threaten to grip them ever more tightly in their hold. Also, while the orthodox and conservative elements fight a rearguard action against everything new, the influential minority of its forward intelligentsia, in spite of the recalcitrants, are busy integrating the culture of the 3rd century B.C., the 4th century A.D., and the medieval periods, with the machine civilisation, which came in from the West at the end of the 18th century and which has matured into the contemporary atomic age of the mid 20th century.

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It is inevitable, therefore, that the spectacle of India should confuse the outsiders. Indeed, many Indians of today are themselves confused by the clash of forms, values and habits. And, often, it is difficult to absorb and understand this country, or to discern a clear direction of advance towards the future, among its intricate and complex strains.

Like a modern Janus, Jawaharlal Nehru, looks to India's long past and to the realisable future, while he stands in the centre of all these conflicts. But this man of destiny, who has not only been India's Prime Minister, since the transfer of power from British to Indian hands, but who is an historian and eclectic thinker at the same time, will have done a good deal towards making the India of today. So it is important to heed his words. Unquestionably, his assertion of the concept of co-existence of various countries, with their differing social systems, owes a good deal to the main doctrine, not of tolerance as the orthodox philosophers call it, but of intolerant-tolerance which has sometimes been practised in India, in spite of invasions, incursions and inner conflicts. The growth of the individual sovereign citizen to his highest potentialities, through the larger community, can only be realised, in the modern world, according to Nehru, in this way by submitting science to the tests of moral values. And the Panchshilla, or the five principles, defined by him, sound almost like an edict of Ashoka, the Buddhist Emperor, of the 3rd century B.C., even as they supply concrete suggestions for a balanced life for the nations and individuals of the world of today.

In fact it is this doctrine of co-existence and peace,

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with its implied dynamic neutralism or non-alignment, that supplies the background for the efforts to build a contemporary Indian Civilisation, different from the old feudal Civilisations and also different from the aggressive high powered Civilisation of the West.

Of course, the process from which this attitude towards political, social and cultural questions has emerged is, in itself, the result of a silent revolution, which the West did not wish to notice, and which has, therefore, been somewhat hidden from the view of the world.

For instance, in a recent essay, Prof. Harry D'Gideonse, President of Brooklyn College, writes:

'There is much talk of freedom and technology in India, but there is very little awareness that the material well-being of the West is largely a byproduct of western, spiritual and moral ideas, plus a positive attitude towards work'. ("An Unsentimental Look At India," *Harper's Magazine*, 1954).

And commenting on these observations on India, in an editorial, the *New York Herald Tribune* says:

'Their approach to industrialisation is socialistic; they refuse private American investments but demand gifts or loans from the American Government to their Government for building American type industry without colonial interference. By some mystic means, clear only to them, these Indians would forswear the Western world while enjoying its benefits, by languidly shaking the tree'.

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This is a cruel mis-statement of the real position. And, of course, not all Americans, who react against world shattering armaments, perpetual cold war and the feverish struggle for still higher standards of living, think this way. All the same, it is symptomatic of one kind of Western attitude.

On the other hand, in Europe, there is a general suspicion about the concept of co-existence, as also some surprise that India has dared to think, even to a very modest extent, of the welfare of human beings as a practical objective for the first time in its history.

There are quite a few leaders of the European intelligentsia, who have given up the concept that 'men make their own history', as also the ideals of the French Revolution of 1789, which ushered a new philosophy of freedom for the whole world. These thinkers are put out either, because this philosophy of freedom took hold of larger numbers of peoples and became a fighting and effective philosophy, or because they see the rapid emergence of the Asian and African peoples towards freedom, a concept which only Europeans had so far enjoyed, as an unwholesome phenomena. They increasingly reject the lessons of the European renaissance and the advance of science to untold power, on the excuse that the latter is being used for merely destructive purposes. Professor Michael Polyani, the Hungarian exile in Oxford, thinks that the rationalist spirit of the Enlightenment has released moral passions which aim at the perfection of the human society, but which issue in 'moral excesses' or in 'moral inversion', and to the use of violence as the way to attain Utopian ends. Like a few others,

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he believes that 'nihilism is a complete non-sequiter from the premises of secular rationalism'. And many other thinkers, frightened of socialism, twist and turn the concept of freedom, matured in the West. The existentialists, particularly, tend to deny social structures and consider the universe merely absurd. The humanism, rationalism, the evolutionism, and the hopeful notions of progress of the 19th century, tend to be discarded. And it has become a mark of distinction among intellectuals to prefer the aristocratic privilege of saying neither 'yes' nor 'no', in order to avoid the necessity of action. They sway endlessly between religious and social justice, morality and politics, between the vertical and horizontal man. And some, like Andre Malraux, go back on their humanist ideals in open alliance with reaction; while others, like Arthur Koestler, merely denigrate all rebellions or struggles in Asia and Africa.

Naturally, therefore, people begin to imagine that hell has been let loose in Asia and Africa and that the East is menacing the West. And it is believed in certain intellectual circles of the West, that 'the individualistic democracy dreamed of by the 18th century rationalist philosophers has only produced that anarchistic form of Utopia which heads the beginning of every revolutionary movement'!

In actual fact, however, what has happened, over the last half a century, is a transformation, mainly through science, but also through a gradual process of synthesis, of Europe and Asia, which is symbolised, to some extent, by the liberation movement of India and other Asian-African countries.

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There has been a resurgence, which is twofold: First of all, there has been the struggle to get rid of alien oppression and exploitation resulting in the freedom of almost all countries of Asia, and some of the colonial countries of Africa. In the second place, there has been going on the fusion of the values of Asian civilisations with the inner values of Western civilisation: particularly the ideas of the renaissance, the encyclopaedists of France and the revolutionaries of '89. The second process began almost two centuries ago. Therefore, of the values of the modern period it is very difficult to say, which value is indigenous and which has been adopted from the West, so inextricably are they mixed up together, mostly through the impositions of the imperialists and sometimes through the deliberate choice of natives.

Now, some Westerners say: 'We wish to blow away the thick smog of sentimentality that has been generated by ambassadors, give away bureaucrats, and almost all the other literati, who have lately enjoyed free round trips to the do-nothing sub-continent of poverty, passivity and sacred kine'. The others, gush over India's 'spiritualism,' stay in well-known ashrams, photograph aboriginal women, preferably with nothing on, and admire the past art without wanting to look at the present efforts. They have no use for the steel mills and the hydro-electric works, because these are supposed to be exclusively 'European products, for European use, made through European technicians', nor do they see the effort to retain the contact of the creative hand with the making of things; and, of course, they suspect the 'Socialist pattern' to be merely

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communism in disguise.

This basic misunderstanding arises from the fact, that those who are attempting to shape a Contemporary Civilisation in India have been thinking aloud without producing an ersatz commodity called the new India. And they have made mistakes, giving less thought to the problems of integration of machines to man than was necessary. At the same time, they have been asking what values to take from the past, how to inherit them, and whether they can be inherited at all. Also, what to take from other people — how much of it and in what form. Obviously, the process of synthesis of cultures is not like a school-boy's arithmetic, merely addition and subtraction. Behind the ideas of the past, there were many social facts, and behind the heterogeneous beliefs there were the mental struggles of many generations. And behind the mechanical Civilisation of the West was the ferocious man-eater of the profit system. All these facts and ideas have to be sifted, because this was not done during the period of Western domination, to any extent, as there was a natural tendency to exalt everything European by the rulers and everything Indian by the Indians. Now, however, there is a process of rediscovery and the various traditions have begun to be assessed. Of course, the very joy of rediscovery often obfuscates the purpose for which the researches were launched. And no one will understand the Indian mind if this process of inheriting the past, with a view to synthesis with the present, is not studied from the compulsion to see that it is a serious, if halting, effort towards shaping a new destiny.

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It is my contention that there is already evident in India the trend towards the synthesis, from which a possible agri-industrial contemporary Indian Civilisation based on respect for the individual may emerge, that the clash of cymbals, the sparks of illumination, and the thunder of loud words, may yield to some balance, which may contribute a corrective to its own inherent contradictions and frustrations, that arise from many surviving bad mental and social habits as well as from the blind acceptance of some of the worst things from the West, and which may help to resolve conflicts elsewhere. Perhaps the new communities of Asia and Africa may develop by default. Armaments may reach saturation point; the El Dorados of money-making may recede and the American way of life may be upturned. A creative era may begin if a world shattering war could be avoided.

But in order to indicate which way India is moving, I would like to analyse some of the inner strains of the past, which weigh so heavily on India, to explain some of the seeming confusions and disparities, and what may be the possible direction of advance.

In this way, the huge question mark 'Whither India?' which hangs on our heads may be answered, even though in a partial manner.

Also, India's relation to the outside world, not only in foreign policy, but in the more intimate fields of social and human relations, may become a little more obvious.

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THE BACKGROUND

APART FROM THE ROUNDED PHRASES AND cliches about the traditional 'spiritualism' of India's past, which is often contrasted with the 'materialism' of the West, it is fairly clear that there are certain residual values, which have survived in broken but recognisable forms, in our country, through long periods of history, especially among the masses, from the culture that arose about 3000 years ago and which persisted, inspite of adjustments, modifications and adaptations, until the 18th century. It is not necessary here to summarise the various parts of Indian 'history' in the European sense of that word, because that history has not yet been reconstructed from the surviving fragments, but we have to understand the mental processes by which certain residual values were held tenaciously until a century or two ago, and which are still surviving in broken forms. Thus the main phases of 'history' may be summed up, so as to provide the background of the past for an easier understanding of the present.

The Indian population, as it is today, seems, from the evidence of skulls in pre-historic cemeteries, to be the blend of three major original stocks. These were:

(1) The Dravidians — a dark, neolithic people, akin to an older stock found in southern Arabia and north east Africa;

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(2) The Mediterraneans — scattered from the Ganges to Spain;

(3) The Mangolians.

Then there were several minor aboriginal stocks, akin to the Melanesians of the Pacific area and small strains of Iranian, Greek, Scythian, Hun, and West European blood.

The fusion of these and other ethnic units took a long time and the roles of the various races have been far too complex to be analysed here. But it seems that once these various strains entered India, they were absorbed and slowly lost their alien character.

The assimilative genius of India through which this happened is almost unique. And important natural traits follow from it. Assimilation, however, did not always amount to integration. The conflict of attitudes and ideas continued throughout, at feverish pace, and left an uneasy social balance.

Let us study the phases of development in the mixing of these strains:

Proto-Dravidian

The first known phase, the Proto-Dravidian civilisation, has come to light since the discovery of the ancient civilisation of Mohenjodaro in Sind, Harappa and Rupar in the Punjab, Luthal in Gujerat and Maheshwar in Central India.

The people of Mohenjodaro and Harappa seem to have had some relation with those of Sumeria and possibly with the Mediterranean civilisation of remote

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antiquity, like those of Crete and Etruscia.

It is sometimes said that the configuration of the earth may have been different at that time and the proverbial flood of the *Bible* may have intervened to separate these peoples who shared the worship of the mother cult. But all this is speculation.

At any rate, it is quite certain that the people of Mohenjodaro, and Harappa, lived in cities, solidly built of brick on a rectangular plan, with a well thought out system of plumbing, public baths and other civic amenities. Their pottery, jewellery, and other crafts, betoken all the signs of the chalcolithic bronze age. They grew and wove cotton, and traded in it, with other countries across the waters, in vessels which look like the modern 'Dhow.' They had a primitive script and made figurines of their gods, among which the trident of the later Hindu God, Shiva, appears. They probably had cults and totemic social structures, like those of early Egypt. They fell before the first waves of the Aryan invaders who were coming down via Assyria and Iran.

There is a vast gap of time between the Proto-Dravidians and the Dravidians. But for lack of exact knowledge we can only group the two peoples together in the first phase of Indian history. These Dravidians were either an indigenous forest peoples or came down from elsewhere and spread all over India.

Our knowledge of them is limited and mainly derived from their successors. They are described as *Krsnah*, black-skinned; *Anasah*, Pug-nosed; *Adevayu*, Godless; *Ayagvan*, devoid of rights; *Mrdhravacah*, babblers; *Sinadevah*, phallic worshippers; *Dasalvas* or *Dasus*,

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robbers or slaves.

They seem to have elaborated the cult of the mother goddess (which also flourished in the Aegean at that time) of tree spirits, snake spirits, nymphs, fauns, dryads and fairies. And they believed in the philosophy of birth and rebirth in this *Samsara*, Universe; *Moksha*, or release from which, could be secured through good deeds. These people seem to have moved down towards the south after Aryan infiltration.

The Aryan Infiltration

The second phase of the Aryan infiltration was perhaps the most vital.

It has been sometimes called immigration, but it may be more aptly called a brutal invasion, which was as cruel as resistance to it was tough.

The main body of the Aryan hordes seem to have come down somewhere from the steppes of Asia or further north about 2000 — 1500 B.C. And it took a long time before the invaders won complete sway over the country. For the Dravidians fought bravely and contested each of their settlements. The Aryans were formidable warriors and possessed superior weapons. They probably brought their wonderful horses and outflanked the heavy moving Dravidians. Also they invoked the help of the war-God, Indra, and begged him to hurl his thunderbolt against the brick walled cities of the Proto-Dravidians, which seemed like iron forts; and the inspiration of this ideology may have helped them.

Although the evidence is still scanty, the hostilities

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between these two elements lasted a long time. All the same, this is the major historical date in India's ancient history. For even through the raging conflicts in which the physical conquests were with the invaders, the spiritual victory ultimately lay with the invaded. The phenomenon of the Aryan invasion may be compared to what happened in Greece at an important juncture in history. There, the blond barbaric Dorian conquerors fell upon the more elaborate civilisation of the Cretans, smashed it, looted it, but learnt some lessons before it perished, thus building out of it a nobler Hellenic culture. The Persians did the same to the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The Greeks did the same to the Egyptians, and the Romans did the same to the Greeks.

Similarly, the Aryan conquerors, speaking an Indo-European language, came down through the Hindukush, and secured the pastures for their big herds of cattle. Being a mainly wandering pastoral people, they were illiterate and culturally far behind the Dravidians whom they subdued.

But through the union of these two strains there arose a tremendous synthesis of cultures, which has come down to us in the Sanskrit language, in Vedic and Upanishadic metaphysical thought, the epics *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the magical tantras and the later classical literature from which were to arise the vernacular tongues, Punjabi, Gujerati, Bengali, Marathi, Oriya, etc.

As the alien conquerors brought few women with them, they began to marry Dravidian women, took over their beliefs, the doctrine of birth and rebirth

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in *Samsara*, and release from the troubles of the world, through good deeds.

The main strains of the joint religion which was formulated during the period of conflicts and mixtures, centres around certain profound speculations about the origin of the world. There is an alliance with the forces of nature, with the energies behind the mighty mountains, the great storms, the magnificent dawns and other inner powers and spirits, which the fertile imagination of these early men seized upon. Thus were conceived the Vedic Gods: Rudra, the God of wind; Indra, the God of rain; Usha, the dawn; Varuna, who encompasses the very heavens. The four Vedas, or inspired books, *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Atharva* and *Sam* give a fairly adequate idea of the cosmogony and practices of the time, probably somewhat influenced by the Sumerian and Babylonian traditions.

After the earlier mixtures with the indigenous populations, about the time of the composition of *Atharva Veda*, it seems that the Aryan priestcraft ordained a caste system, based on *Varna*, colour.

The Brahmins seem to have reacted against the increasing influence of Dravidian cults, associated with the phallus, and the prominence which Rudra-Shiva was acquiring in the eyes of the populace. They sought to exalt *Yoga*, meditation, as a higher form of worship, began to insist on reverence for the bull and the cow, which had hitherto been sacrificed and eaten freely.

The four castes into which society was divided, also became inevitable through the division of labour, rendered necessary in the towns and settlements, which

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rose in such places in the Indo-Gangetic basin, as Puskaravati, Taxila, Asandvant, Hastinapura, Inderprastha, Virata, Nagara, Kampilya, Ahicchatra, Kasi, Ayodhya and Mithila. These four castes were: Brahmins or priests; Kshatriyas or warriors; Vaishas or traders; Sudras, the lowest workers; and untouchables beyond caste.

Some of the Kshatriya warriors did not accept the discrimination involved in caste. And a literature of protest and inquiry began to grow up through the metaphysical truths uttered by the hermits who retired to the forests. The aphorisms, spoken by the sages in the mountains and the jungles, are called the *Upanishads*, or forest books.

These show a broad philosophy of belief in the One principle, Brahma, who becomes many, when the desire to split Himself into Many arises in His heart. There is a corresponding urge in the Many, to attain unity with the one, by transcending the various forms and processes of sense experience and thought-texture involved in the constant flux of the phenomenal world called *Maya*, Illusion.

Apart from the *Upanishads*, there were also compiled certain books called *Brahmanas*, in which there is some evidences of contact with the Assyrians, from whom certain rituals, like the involvement of seventeen officiating priests in a sacrifice, were borrowed.

The human history of the fratricidal wars of the Aryans is recorded in the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. In the later book, the doctrine of the king of kings emerges and it is likely that various dynasties struggled for power from decade to decade

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and century to century. And most of the political and social values were established during this time.

If we take the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is an appendix to the *Mahabharata*, as an index of the thinking of the time, we get a glimpse of how the Hindus understood the concept of freedom. As against the limited definition of freedom in contemporary politics, freedom did not mean self-government or autonomy, but emancipation from desire. The contemporary concept of freedom entails the presence of choice, which is clearly rooted in desire, or in self-interest. On the other hand, Lord Krishna in the *Gita* offered the choice based on *Dharma*, which means that one has to choose that which is right, or ordained as right. Thus the conception of morality is rather like Kant's categorical imperative, in so far as what is right is supposed to be right, because the king of kings with the divine light in his eyes, says so.

In the midst of the many conflicts of dynasties and ideas, among the upper orders, one thing remained relatively unchanged, generation after generation: The self-sufficient Indian village.

It is likely that the very defects of the Hindu caste order, its sense of discrimination, and its closed nature, proved, for some time, to be useful, for these small self-governing village republics of India, lasted out, almost intact, till about two centuries ago. For while kingdoms rose and fell, this real unit of Indian life survived.

The main principle behind the village social structure was that *there was no private property in land*. All the villagers had the right to cultivate the land apportioned

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to them by the Panchayats or the councils of five; and the other land was held in common; as well as the forest land from which the fuel wood and the other amenities were taken. Even the king, who was suzerain, did not own the land, but had the right to collect revenue, in lieu of his promise to defend the country, keep roads in good repair and to arrange public works. The taxes were paid in kind, by the peasants. And even the services of the potter, the carpenter, the smith, the school teacher, the tanner and the sweeper, were paid for in grain.

If it is asked, as it is often asked, how India could survive, in spite of the many changes at the main centres, then the answer is to be found in the self-governing, self-sufficient village, from which people moved away in troubled times, only to come back and reclaim their heritage, again and again. The hereditary institutions of the craftsmen lasted out, based much more on caste than on occupation; and though the religious sanctions of caste reinforced social ostracism, caste kept the village intact, though moribund. There is no parallel anywhere else in the world to the rigidity and exclusiveness of the caste system, which limited social intimacy and confined marriage to one's own caste or subcaste. The privileged Brahmanical order had ensured against all change by a subtle psychology of ritualistic worship and it was difficult to break this static order.

The only good that survived from the primitive communism of the village was its integral connection with the earth; the relation between a man's soul and his job to the extent to which ritual did not crush the

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soul altogether; and some sense of harmony with nature.

Revolts Against Hinduism

The third phase of Indian history is marked by the revolts against Hinduism. The hidebound character of the Hindu system, called forth various reactions among which, however, the Godless humanism of Gautama, the Buddha, and the non-violence of Mahavira Jina, were the most spectacular. These two prophets of the 6th century B.C. allied themselves with the most oppressed peoples and attracted even the various feudal oligarchies of kshatriyan kings, leading to new waves of thinking and feeling.

The Buddha, himself born of a noble family, aimed at social equality and the dissolution of caste. He advocated compassion, or tenderness, for every thing, and preached anti-Brahmanism, though he subscribed to the Hindu theory of birth and rebirth in *Samsara*, Universe, from which *Moksha* could be achieved into *Nirvana*, the state of absorption into a noble nothingness.

Mahavira Jina preached the non-hurting of all living beings, humanitarianism and vegetarianism; and his teaching has remained influential all over India until this day.

The invasion of India by Alexander of Macedon shook the consciousness of the people though, as they moved away from the villages and came back after his withdrawal, the shock was absorbed.

And then the mighty dynasty of the Mauryas arose, with a far-flung empire modelled on the empire of the

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Achaemenid Persian Emperor, Darius, whose kingdom had once spread to the Sind and Punjab but tottered before the Macedonian onslaught and was lost in ruins. The Mauryas absorbed the Asiatic part of the Empire left by Alexander in numerous Greek settlements, which spread from Bactria down to Kashmir and from Afghanistan to the Middle East. Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the empire, with his minister, Chanakya, established international contacts and a comparatively stable government. Chandragupta gathered many elements, specially Persian and Greek, into the court and his minister, Chanakya, gave a new meaning to the concept of 'the king of kings'.

The composite culture, which arose from the mingling with the west Asiatic elements, from which the Aryans had come, with the Caucasian, Assyrian, Iranian, Schythian, Dravidian, Achaemenid, Greek and other indigenous complexes, evolved into an eclectic juxtaposition in this period.

Ashoka (323-262 B.C.) the third of the great Maurya Emperors, unified the greater part of India and Central Asia, adopted the humanist and pacifist gospel of the Buddha and spread it through his missionaries and his edicts, written in the Kharosthi scripts, adapted from the Assyrian-Persian tradition of records on rocks and pillars.

The tender Buddhist civilisation, popularised by this king, was in intimate touch with Hellenism and Iranian Culture, both of which contributed permanent values to the creative art of the Maurya, Sunga, Kushan and Satvahana dynasties before the beginning of the

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Christian Era.

And revolutionary changes took place in the political life and social thought of the people during the six centuries from the 3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D. Even the literature of India may have been affected, on the evidence of St. Chrysostom (A.D. 117), who says that the poetry of Homer is sung by the Indians. And this evidence is corroborated by Plutarch and Aelian.

This may account for similarities in the themes of the *Ramayana* and the *Iliad*. Also, the stage plays of the Greek masters, Sophocles and Aeschylus, may have had something to do with the Hindu classical drama, though, according to Indian concepts, tragedy is no part of drama, because pain is an essential part of becoming, while the Greek drama was based on the concept of the unknown fates, who govern man's destiny but leave man free to choose between alternatives.

We do not exactly know the exact extent of the comminglings, but words like *Yavanika*, the drop curtain, obviously came from *Yavana* or the Greeks, because the Indian stage had previously been round, admitting complete unity between actors and the audience. The satirical comedies of the Greeks may have affected the humorous vein in the *Mrchhakatika* of the 6th century A.D. as the Greek tradition in India had not quite expired by that time. In the field of astronomy also, there were borrowings. For, says the *Gargi Samita*: 'The *Yavanas* are barbarians and yet the signs of astronomy began with them, and for this they must be reverenced like the Gods.' The

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Greeks, who had learnt the Zodiac from the Babylonians, gave this to the Indians, who had also already learnt from the Babylonians the art of divining the future by means of stars. The Hindus gave the concept of *dama*, value or price, to the Greeks, who called it *drachme*.

The ancient tradition of carving stone, which had been evolved by the Proto-Dravidians in Harappa, had not died out. This was based on the interior realisation of the vital breaths (*prana*), and energies which inform life, so that, in the Harappa torso, we see the swelling of the forms from within as against the Greek idea of imitating muscle and bone of the human figure as an archetype. Strangely enough, however, the two opposed concepts met in the Indian Buddhist tradition of sculpture, shaped by the Greek provincial sculptors of the Kabul valley, as well as of Ethdemis, Dematrya, and Sakala right down to Peshawar, Taxila, Mathura and even Pataliputra. The Buddha had forbidden his followers from forming his image, the faith being represented, according to his *Hinayana*, negative, teaching, by symbols like the Bodhi tree, the Chatra, and the *Dharmachakra Parvatana*, turning of the wheel of law. The people of Gandhara had adopted the *Mahayana* (greater vehicle) Buddhism, after the first Buddhist Council met in Peshawar.

The Hindu Sunga general, who founded a dynasty after murdering the last Mauryan king, ruled from Magdha. The attitude of the Hindu Sungas, towards the Buddhist and the Greeks, was one of active hostility.

During the 1st century after Christ, or thereabouts, a Hindu counter reformation asserted itself and sought

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to uproot the hold of Buddhism on the poor people. The abbots of the Buddhist monasteries, from Gandhara to Sarnath, and down to Bharut and Sanchi, had grown fat with the alms given by the laity. The monks did not participate in the birth, marriage and death ceremonies of their followers. Thus the Hindu priestcraft, patronised by the Sungas, who actively intervened in such ceremonies, subtly ousted the more rational Buddhist doctrine, though Buddhism spread from its northern centres to the western coast, to the Deccan, to south-east Asia and upwards to Tibet, China, Korea and Japan.

The basis of the Hindu counter reformation was the doctrine of henotheism, according to which the three main Vedic deities, who had been assuming great importance for the people, were exalted to the position of supreme Godhood, and worship, with a more personal devotion than the pure contemplation with which the supreme Brahman had been hitherto honoured. Vishnu, the blessed incarnation of Supreme God, became the centre of the doctrine of Hindu faith, called Vaishnavism, which was to flourish over the greater part of northern and central India. Shiva, the wild primeval god of the mountains, of forests and storms, became the chief reincarnation of the great Creator and the symbol of Shivaism; Shakti, the consort of Shiva, the dynamic mother goddess, who had been the common deity of the peoples from northern India to Crete, Etruscia and up to Norway, and had come down, through the magical cults of the Proto-Dravidians of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, and the Dravidians, now became the main symbol of the divine in the cult

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of Shaktism.

These three forms of Brahmanical theism knit together the Hindu faith for the next two thousand years to come. There were, of course, setbacks, through foreign incursions, changes of doctrine and belief, with adaptations and reinterpretations, but the basic religio-philosophical hypothesis of the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmanas* (so-called forest books), about the One and the Many, was sustained on the basis of the caste order and the working faith in the transmigration of souls through good and bad deeds.

The Hindu view of life came to be accepted essentially as a spiritual progression. At the centre of it was the urge for self-realisation. All knowledge was considered divine by origin. And the efficacy of intuition, over and above reason, was emphasised for the purpose of attaining union with God. The bonds of ignorance could be cut by the intellect, but the final merging into the supreme required an act of total inner surrender.

In order to promote self-realisation, the four portions of life were dedicated to four essential ends. These were:

(1) *Dharma* — the discharge of duties and obligations and the practice of virtue;

(2) *Artha* — the acquisition of wealth for use;

(3) *Kama* — the enjoyments of the pleasures of life;

(4) *Moksha* — or the freedom from the sense of wanton desire and attainment of full liberation.

This fourfold order of life, which was later codified

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in books called *Dharmashastra*, became the basis of Indian culture, because this scheme did not involve rejection of the world, but embodied precautions against the temptations of losing sight of the goal of self-realisation. And it remained a dynamic view for nearly seven hundred years. Moreover, the very comprehensiveness of this doctrine about life enabled Hindu thought to absorb many incidental and outside doctrines, in the attempt at the unity of the world of spirit and matter, which were seen not as antagonistic to each other but as complementary and vitally related.

In the first four hundred years of the Christian Era, this reformation led to a cultural renaissance.

The Sungas had absorbed the two currents of thought, Hindu and Buddhist, and patronised a tremendous artistic activity in the country, which was considerably influenced by the Greeks. The Greeks were converted to Vaishnavism and Buddhism, respectively. Helliodorus and Menander were a few of the men who accepted these faiths.

The railings at Barhut and Sanchi, round the Mauryan Buddhist stupas, were achieved in this age. Helliodorus erected a pillar in honour of Vishnu at Besnagar, where the Yakshi figure in polished stone had already been hewn.

The Sungas were followed, in Magdha, by short-lived families of Kanvas, while Greeks and Parthians evolved new frontiers.

At this stage the Saka invasions began.

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More Foreign Incursions

The fourth recognisable phase of Indian Civilisation begins with foreign incursions, inaugurated by the coming of the Sakas.

They flooded the country in great waves, spreading into Sind, Punjab and southwards. Although they were invaders, they came to settle down in the land and made India their home. They established five important principalities: Sind, Taxila, Mathura, Malwa and Maharashtra. They subdued the Satavahanas and other dynasties and began to build a common culture with the people whom they had reduced. They patronised literature and science. For instance, the Saka Satrap in Ujjain, Rudradaman, had his exploits recorded in chaste Sanskrit on the Girnar hill. Surprisingly enough, while the Andhra Satavahanas were Brahmins, who recorded their epigraphs in Prakrit, it was the foreign Sakas, who, from A.D. 150 onwards, gave India her classical Sanskrit style after this language had been matured in the *Brahamanas* and *Arnayakas*. Also, they patronised astronomy. They made the city of Ujjain the Greenwich of that time. And this and the other Greek sciences came to be studied in Malwa.

The Kushans were a later wave of Sakas, who also settled down mostly in the north, though they ventured as far as Orissa and south-east India. They accepted Buddhism and patronised the indigenous sculptors, to evolve a fine synthesis of the Greek style with the Indian mental images. The great school of carving in Mathura bears witness to their vital faith in the

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teaching of the Buddha, revived under the famous emperor, Kanishka, in the 1st century A.D., through the Mahayana, or greater vehicle conference held by him in Peshawar.

The Kushans popularised the long flowing choga, from which later our *Achkin* was to be evolved. Also, they brought the *kurta* and the tight *pyjama*-like lower garment. The tall boots, worn by Kanishka in his Mathura statue, continued to be worn by horse riders, and were also adopted for riding in the warmer eastern India as evidenced by the Surya image at Konarak in Orissa. It is likely that they brought sun-worship with them and familiarised this Surya image, though the God Surya had already appeared in the vedic religion as an anthropomorphic deity. But the Kushans obviously initiated the personal worship of the Surya image, and it is from their example that this worship became possible in the Martand Temple in Kashmir and in Bahvarchi or Bharaich in Uttar Pradesh. They also built Sun Temples in Multan, where the first wave of Sakas had founded settlements. The Saka and Kushan coins bore the figure of Surya, (Sun) and Chandra (Moon) on their faces.

Although the Sakas and the Kushans met stiff opposition from the Satavahanas, and, later, from Chandragupta Vikramaditya, they survived and were absorbed by the Indian people. And for a long time, that is to say, until the 10th century, they ruled over the Kabul valley, Punjab and Sind under the title of Sahi kings, guarding the frontiers of India up to the Hindukush for sixty generations. The composite culture evolved by them had a lasting influence. The

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Mahayana, or the greater vehicle school of Buddhism, broke down the rigidity of the *Hinayana*, or the lesser vehicle school, and vitalised the teachings of the Buddha, until it swept over India as an almost pagan cult absorbing the ancient Dravidian worships. The lovely *Yakshis* (tree spirits), with their naked sensuous bodies, hewn by the loving hands of sculptors, restored woman, in all her allurement, to worship among the people. In fact, the tender humanism of the Buddha flowered only through the delicate sensibilities of the Saka and Kushan nobility.

The Classical Renaissance and the Kingdoms of the South

The fifth phase of Indian Civilisation began under the Gupta Emperors who ruled for nearly 300 years. This has been called the Golden Age of India, during which time the bulk of northern, western, eastern and central India came under the influence of a single dynasty.

The Guptas were Hindu kings, who revived the fourfold order of their ancestral religion, and made it the basis of Indian culture. As this fourfold scheme did not involve the rejection of the world but embodied precautions against the temptations of losing sight of the goal of self-realisation, it remained a dynamic view for considerable periods. The comprehensiveness of the Hindu doctrine about life now enabled Hindu thought to absorb many more incidental and outside doctrines, restating the unity of the world of spirit and matter, which were seen not as antagonistic with each other but as complementary to each other.

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In the first 400 years of the Christian Era, this Hindu wave led to a social and cultural renaissance, through which the previous composite strains of literature and art were synthesised and flourished as never before or after under the stable dynasty of the Gupta Emperors. And many of the values of the past were refashioned and clothed in the most sensitive poetry in Sanskrit and bequeathed to later generations. There were frequent controversies between the Hindus and the Buddhists and the Jains, which helped to generate a certain tolerant-intolerance, that was to come down, in the various periods, as a residual operative value with the emphasis more on intolerance than tolerance. Also, the adventurousness of the human spirit in the India of that time, and its assimilative, all-embracing character, reaffirmed the kind of universalist view of the Vedas to which nothing was alien.

The incapacity of later Gupta kings to hold the northern Empire intact, led to political disunity under attack from outside elements. The Hindus became defensive and began to codify their culture. The *Smiritis* and law codes were redefined to save the caste system, which had almost broken down through the constant influx of foreigners. The caste regulations were stiffened, even child marriages being sanctioned to avoid the danger of alien peoples taking away young virgins. The aliens, who had come without women, were now rejected from Hinduism though still admitted to the worship of the god Shiva. And the holy books, *Puranas*, sometimes admitted the low caste people to a place in heaven. This codification of thought led to formalism and rigidity, in or about

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the 4th century A.D., and the dynamic of the Golden Age was lost. The Sanskrit language itself became a pastime for the grammarians, and the Prakrits, or the spoken speech of the people, began to take the place of the classical language. The great Gupta tradition of sculpture and painting, which was the halcyon point of Indian achievement in the temples of Uttar Pradesh, and the monasteries of Ajanta, began to decline from its sense of reality and intense colours into decorative patterns, and sentimental prettiness.

These weaknesses were, of course, intensified by the new waves of invasions, which the Sahis of the north could not prevent. For a century or more the Scythians, the Huns and the Jats, came down in waves and penetrated deep into the countryside, in spite of the spirited defence of the indigenous dynasties. The confusion of Indian society was aggravated. The central Empire broke up. And people moved southwards to safety and better lands, reaching as far down as south-east Asia, where Indian monks and merchants had already been adventuring for more than two centuries.

In the face of foreign attacks, the Indian mind closed up. The worst characteristics of the caste-system were accentuated and the whole people became divided into smaller and smaller principalities, with small-state-mindedness as the obsessive trait of the various kingdoms.

The self-sufficient village alone remained intact, decadent and static, but lasting out through its natural assets of fuel, wood, cornland, wild fruit, water, air,

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the Sun and other graces of nature, as also the sheer biological sense of survival. There was, indeed, an attempt at a Hindu revival in the forest kingdoms and many temples came to be built, in honour of the God Shiva, whose help was invoked in the defence against foreigners. There was enough vitality in this revival to enable the people to hold certain bastions. Thus, at the end of the 5th century, the Abhiras (Ahirs) began to build up a mighty kingdom in the west and deliberately concocted their genealogies with the wish to be related to Lord Krishna, the god of the cow-herds of the later *Mahabharata* period. The Gujars, another milkman tribe, gave their name to Gujerat, and became mixed up with the Gurjara Pratiharas of Central India. The Jats infiltrated into Rajasthan. The Huns, who came last from China had swept across Central Asia, had broken the back of the Roman Empire and swooped down on the granaries of northern India, thus shattering the remnants of the Gupta Empire. They met with opposition, here and there, retreated, regrouped their forces and returned to settle down in India.

These conquering tribes could not be accepted into the Hindu caste system. And they would not submit to the position of Sudras. Thus they came to be acknowledged as a new and distinct kind of *Kshatriya* warrior community.

A purificatory ceremony was held at Mt. Abu, and they were collectively admitted into the Hindu fold. The five famous Rajput families, Agnikulas, were supposed to have arisen from the sacrificial fire. These Rajputs were to occupy Rajputana and fought with

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courage and persistence against all the later oncomers, performing *Johur*, or absorption in fire and light, against advancing forces and committing their women to *Sati*, or immolation in the flames of fire, against foreign hordes.

The early medieval revival in the arts, which was based on the worship of Shiva, did not, however, unite the country.

The only unity in northern India, after the Gupta Empire, came under Harshavardhana, who combined the throne of Thaneshwar and Kanauj.

In the south the great contemporary of Harshavardhana was Pulakesin II, the western Chalukya king, who drove back Harsha when the latter tried to cross the Narbada.

Further south, was the formidable contemporary of both Harsha and Pulakesin, the Pallava King, Narasimhavarman, from Kanchi, who attacked and sacked Badami, the capital of Pulakesin II.

The 7th and 8th century A.D. witnessed many feuds between the western Chalukyas of Badami and the Pallavas of Kanchi. At last, in the 8th century, the Chalukyas lost their throne to the Rashtrakutas, who had been a powerful dynasty in the Deccan and of whom King Krishna had built the magnificent rock cut temple of Ellora. The Rashtrakutas had constant quarrels with the Cholas, who succeeded the Pallavas and eastern Chalukyas in Andhra.

After Harsha, while the Gurjara-Pratiharas ruled Central India till the 11th century, with Mahirbhuja as the most spectacular King of this line, Bengal was under the Pal dynasty. And Kashmir enjoyed tremen-

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dous glory under Lalitdatya who built the town of Parihaspura and the famous Sun Temple at Martand.

The Palas, who ruled over eastern India from the 4th century to the 8th century downwards, were Buddhists. They inspired much Buddhist learning, specially at Nalanda. The eastern Gangas of Orissa had a long and continuous history — the most formidable of this line being Ananta Varmachodaganga in the 11th century, and Narasimha in the 13th century. The first built the temple of Puri and the second was responsible for the great temple of Konarak.

The Rashtrakutas of the Deccan were overthrown by the Chalukyas. And then new Chalukyas ruled from Kalyani, and one of their line, Vikramaditya VI is well known.

The Cholas in the south were succeeded by Pallavas in the middle of the 9th century. They patronised both temple sculpture and painting and had bronzes of the gods cast. The Cholas also struck out towards the north. Rajindra Chola got as far as the Ganges and into south-east Asia, where he crippled the power of Saikudras with his mighty fleet. Rajindra Chola's grandson, Kulottunga, combined the eastern Chalukya and Chola thrones. The formidable power of the Cholas was eclipsed by Pandya Jatavarman, who blazed forth in the 13th century A.D.

The Hoysalas took the place of the western Chalukyas and the Yadavas replaced the eastern Chalukyas. The Yadavas were themselves swept aside by the Rasktyas about the 12th century A.D.

All these were finally smashed by Malik Kafur, the General of Ala-ud-Din Khilji, at the beginning of the

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14th century A.D.

The last great Hindu Kingdom in the south was that of Vijayanagar, which continued from about the middle of the 14th century to 17th century, in spite of its clashes with the Muhammadan Sultans. The great King, Krishna Devaraya, of this line, was a magnanimous and enlightened monarch, who had several beautiful temples built and renovated many more all over South India. The death knell of the Vijayanagar Empire was sounded by the battle of Talikota, when the Sultanates of Bidar, Bijapur, Golkonda and Ahmadnagar took over for a short period, being themselves swept aside by the growing Mughal power in the north.

Thus, although we see a unique kind of mental unity, which bound the various parts of the country, the diverse strands of the population still remained alien to each other. For instance, the Ahirs, the Gujars, the Jats and the Rajputs, evolved distinct physical and communal habits, in spite of their absorption into the Hindu body politic. And the south, though professing Hinduism, was also divided.

The lack of social and political cohesion of the early medieval India had been an open invitation to foreign armies. The vacuum at the centre was always inviting. And the history of the south in the Medieval period only follows the sequence of events of the break-up of the Hindu kingdoms of the north.

Impact of Muslim Invasions

In this way had begun the sixth phase of Indian culture which was marked by the impact and absorption of

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the various waves of Muslim invasion.

The first of these, under Muhammad Bin Kasim, in A.D. 712, was merely a forage raid to the north and west of India. It soon passed but left the influence of Islam on our country.

At that time, the Arabs were playing the role of the advance guard of Islam, all over the lands between the Oxus and the Indus in the east, to the shores of the Atlantic in the west, and from the Caspian Sea in the north, and to the Nile in the south. The words of the Prophet Muhammad had become a mission for the adoration of the One God in the hands of his followers during the century after the Prophet's death. The Arabs had preserved the remnants of Greek philosophies and their own sciences. They borrowed mathematics and medicine from the Indians, wrapped up this and other knowledge in the paper, which they learnt to make from China, and propagated this illumination in the West.

Thus they did not always enter other countries, as is often alleged, under the militant banner of Islam, but as the champions of a new enlightenment.

For instance, the conquest of Sind brought benevolent kingdoms under the settlers and, for three hundred years, the Arab Generals of that part of the country ruled in a kind of co-existence with formidable neighbouring Hindu kingdoms.

The next wave of Muslim conquest under Subuktigin and Mahmud of Ghazni, in the 9th century, were more ruthless, and these were followed by sixteen incursions by the same Mahmud.

Singly, some of the Indian princes repulsed Mahmud.

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But, as they could not unite, this conqueror carried all before him, looting treasures, breaking temples and carrying off people as slaves. The impact of this monarch lasted for nearly a century and a half, on northern India, where his descendants ruled over diverse clans, tribes and peoples, on an area spreading from Afghanistan to the lower fringes of the Punjab.

Although the Muslim power constantly threatened the Hindu dynasties from the striking points of the Punjab, the local princes failed to get together. And when a second great wave of Muslim conquest assailed them under Muhammed Ghori, this time the Muslim sway spread permanently over northern India, from Kabul to Lahore, and thence to Delhi and Bengal.

Thus Delhi became, from now on, the capital of the loosely knit Muslim Empire, whose feudatory princes and generals ruled in the provinces.

Soon, the outsiders were absorbed into the Indian population and became easygoing through the comparative luxury which they enjoyed from the fertile earth.

Tartars and Mughals

The seventh phase of Indian history began with the Tartar invasion of Timur the Lame, in 1398, which shook the centre of Delhi as well as the provincial Sultanates.

At this stage, a combination of Hindu kings, based on reinforced Shaivism, under Rajput leadership, was on the point of overthrowing the Empire of Delhi.

But a new conqueror broke in from the north. This was Babur, a descendant of Timur the Lame. He

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captured Delhi in 1526, broke the rising Rajput power in the following year and founded the Mughal dynasty.

After temporary withdrawal against Pathan resistance, Babur's son, Humayun, returned to India, and, from then on, the paramount power of the Mughals held sway over the country until the end of the 18th century.

This seventh phase of Indian Culture posed the problems of the clash between Hinduism and Islam and, to a large extent, solved these problems.

Under Akbar the Great, a larger measure of centralisation and unity was achieved, than had been possible since Ashoka and the later Guptas. The spiritual crisis was resolved by the king proclaiming a new religion, which was a mixture of Hinduism and Islam.

In the time of the previous Muslim dynasties, the closed system of the Hindus had met the closed system of the Muslims. The former was pantheistic, caste-ridden and idol-worshipping, with all kinds of ancillary faiths juxtaposed with it. The latter was a unitarian system, based on the brotherhood of all believers who must be converted at all costs, with or without the sword. The genius of Akbar saw the chasm which divided his Hindu and Muslim subjects. And, with a remarkable insight into the future, he began, tolerantly, to find ways and means to reconcile his people to each other.

Although his constructive and beneficial policies did not succeed completely, the synthesis between the alien and native cultures proceeded. They were periods of iconoclasm and persecution, but also there was a constant intermixture. The Muslim princes and the nobility often married Hindu wives. And

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there was little tension between the two creeds in the villages, the converted Muslims being mostly Indians who had inherited racial memories in common with the Hindus.

Thus a new cosmopolitan culture of various elements began to pulsate in India, formed out of the sublime Persian poetry in fusion with the deeper Hindu epic and lyric verse. Unlike the Sakas, the Huns and the Jats, the new Muslims had brought a sense of social organisation and new rules of conduct. These began to influence Indian social polity and were moulded by it.

The contribution of Islam to Indian Culture was, therefore, immense. The Muhammadan Sufi mystical thought merged into Indian mysticism. The Persian and Arabic languages took on local colour. Many Muslims had already begun, under the pre-Mughal Sultans, to write and compose verse and prose in the local languages and dialects. But the indigenous *Khariboli*, evolved, in the Mughal army camps, into the new style of mixed speech, called Urdu; and to the development of this both Hindus and Muslims were to contribute. In fact, this Urdu language helped to build up Hindi prose and became a common language, Hindustani, which is prevalent more or less all over India today.

The new land tenure of Akbar, organised by his finance Minister Raja Todar Mal, brought about a major reform on the land, revitalising the village economy and introducing some elements of a near social revolution. Certainly, India became united, for the first time, after eleven centuries. And those elements of disunity which remained, were healed by

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the teaching of several medieval saints and social reformers. Among these, Nanak and Kabir founded two new religions which were based on the fundamental urge for ending communal discord and achieving emotional integration of the people. The craftsmen of India mingled with the artisans who came from abroad and an eclectic style of architecture began to be evolved. The Saracenic and the Central Asian styles, mixed with the native elements of the *Silpa Shastras*, and domes and towers and arches and *mehrabs*, began to set off to effect the mosques and palaces and tombs of the Muslim patrons. Their charm was enhanced by the geometrical designs of gardening and horticulture, which were decoratively introduced into all plans for buildings. The miniature painting, based on a mixture of decorative Persian models and rich Hindu colourings, had become a distinctive style under the pre-Mughal Sultanates. The patronage of the Mughal Emperors gave the miniatures a new elegance and sensitiveness, born of a poetical outlook. The Mughal contribution to Indian music was also fairly extensive. New tunes of great variety enriched the heavy Hindu strains, and the enlightened dynasty as well as the nobility also promoted the Kathak dance style, through which an ancient Hindu form assumed a decorative splendour which has survived till this day. The first planned city of India at Fatehpur Sikri, under Akbar, was also the expression of a synthetic philosophy of life. The new clothes fashioned on the costumes of the Sakas and Kushans took root. And, both in small and big things, the composite Indian civilisation of these four or five centuries seems, in its

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achievements, to be the equal of its contemporaries in Europe.

European Penetration

The eighth phase of Indian culture, which began with the European infiltration was, however, to be the most crucial, both for good or ill, in our country.

And there was a certain inevitability about it, which sprang from the different social, economic and political forces which had begun to confront each other since the 15th century A.D.

For it is quite clear that while the Indian feudal civilisation, even under the Mughals, remained pastoral and agrarian in the villages of India, incapable of any spontaneous new development, because of the basic self-sufficiency of the isolated, and yet resilient, Indian village economy (where no one owned land, but every one enjoyed certain rights in it), the Europeans brought a new development, based on the Western stresses, in Great Britain. No important and vital class of comprodor bourgeois had arisen in India, like the mercantile middle classes of the West. And, as no social movement stirred the feudal political and economic structure after Akbar, so the fundamental reformation, which was at work in the world of religion and thought, did not embrace the whole of India, specially the areas where the Europeans first settled down. Above all, neither Hindu speculation, nor the Muslim Koranic doctrines, encouraged in India the methods of experimental science, against introvert and mystical faiths, which latter were insistent on individual self-realisation

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as against the European Christian doctrine of 'Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself', that had humanised the Graeco-Roman ideal of the all-powerful state, based on reason and stimulating inquiry into social, aesthetic and physical well being. So that while the general atmosphere in India conduced to a sensitive and humane attitude, based on certain traditional natural values, it still accepted a variety of ways of living, feeling and thinking, in spite of the acceptance of caste exclusiveness and communal non-interference, as a philosophy of life. On the other hand, the intellectual attitude which had grown up in Europe, from the reformation in religion and the renaissance built on new knowledge of the physical sciences, was attended by a mighty technical advance which was to smother the more introvert civilisations of Asia, and destroy them almost in a single fell swoop.

It is under these conditions that the two civilisations of India and Europe met, when the waves of sea-borne invasions began and finally led to the conquest of India by the East India Company, as the agents of British commercial power.

This phase, which was marked by the Western invasion of India, was the most far reaching in its effects, not only because it led to the completest domination of our political life by members of an alien race, for the next 200 years, but because it struck at the very roots of our civilisation and culture, and thus began to transform, change or destroy the residual human values which had accrued to us in some state of preservation, in spite of our social decay.

There was no pre-meditated, deliberate and studied

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attack, by the British, on the inner fabric of Indian Civilisation. The alien rulers were, in the main, taking certain practical steps to subjugate the conquered territories and to introduce certain, according to them, convenient social forms and create conditions to carry out the exploitation of the country, for their own benefit, in a manner natural to all outside elements, but particularly characteristic of the Imperialist conquerors from the West who came to dominate Asia and Africa.

The crucial factor, in all this, was that the British represented a totally different form of civilisation from the Indian. They were the precursors of a giant industrial revolution, which was, in itself, based on at least three previous social changes in English history. They had absorbed into their lives the results of the first Baronial revolution through which the feudal lords had obtained the Magna Carta from King John, and won the power to own private property in land in lieu of various tributes to the king. The British had inherited the consequences of the struggle of the young lords of the 15th century, who limited the powers of the monarchy. The British were heirs to the Cromwellian puritanical revolt, during which the head of King Charles was chopped off. They had brought about the bourgeois revolution of the 18th century, by which the middle sections became the greatest organised industrial force in Western Europe, smashed the Portuguese, Dutch and French rivals and established the widespread British Empire. Obsessed with the correctness of their mission, to bring the blessings of British rule and Christianity to the natives of the East

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they went ahead, introducing such machine forms as were quite alien to the structure of Indian Society, without much comprehension of the inner nature of the subject peoples.

The most vital of these measures was the new land system, which they brought into their territories in Bengal, under the Permanant Settlement Act of Lord Cornwallis. This law vested private property in land among the people who had never known *private ownership* of land, but who had always enjoyed certain *rights in land*, such as the right to till as many fields as a family in the village wanted, the right to graze the cattle on common lands, and the right to collect fuel wood from the common forest.

Actually, the British wanted to expedite the collection of taxes from the population whom they did not know. Thus they appointed a certain number of middlemen, called the 'Brown Barons', to collect revenue from the villagers on the condition that these tax gatherers would pay a certain portion to the Sarkar keeping the rest for themselves.

The 'Brown Barons' naturally became extortionate and imposed various legal and illegal taxes on the peasantry, such as elephant tax, the tax for the marriages of the landlord's relatives, and the tax for the birth of his sons, etc.

The peasants, who had come into the ownership of their small plots and holdings, through the new law, were often forced to sell out their plots to the 'Brown Barons'. Thus the small peasants became progressively poorer, while the tax gatherers acquired vast estates. And the increasingly expropriated peasantry began

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to trek towards the towns as a potential lumpen proletariat.

The British initiated certain industries in India. They thought that in this way they would be nearer the raw materials, which they were hitherto exporting to Great Britain; nearer the cheap labour, which had become available in plenty; and nearer the ultimate market. Unfortunately for them their industries in India began to offer stiff competition to similar industries in Great Britain, which were importing raw materials from the colonies, paying higher wages to their own labour force, and spending money on freight, before the finished goods reached the colonial market. So they slowed down industrial development in India, besides choking the beautiful handlooms of the Indian weavers which still offered competition.

The British land reform thus represented, not the mere impact of the West on India, but a tremendous social revolution, which was to alter the basic relations of Indian society and bring in such economic relations, which by their play and interplay, brought the ancient Indian feudal society, with its residual traditional values, into the orbit of the commercial profit-making, mechanical, cash nexus system of the West.

Besides the inner changes of Indian economy, the British imposed a central, unitary system of Government on India, to administer their estate properly. They introduced a railway system and roads to carry their army from one place to the other. They improved the postal service and brought swifter means of communications. And as they could not transport enough white Sahibs to fill the inferior posts in the

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administration, they initiated a system of education by which they could produce native clerks, with just enough smattering of the English language to fill the registers and read Government orders. They deliberately excluded the knowledge of the Indian classical languages and ancient learning from the curriculum of the British Indian universities and rejected Indian culture through the expert pronouncement of Lord Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education*, as so much ' fanciful myth and legend '.

From now on there was no choice for the Indian people, but to approximate to those political, economic and social conditions which were necessary for material survival.

The cash nexus society of the West had come in, and payment in kind, by the production of grain, had gone forever. The crafts were starved. The peasants impoverished. And every individual in India became subject to the fluctuating laws of the capitalist system, which had already begun to dominate all the processes of life in the West. The class system of Europe was superimposed on the caste systems of India.

The fact that the British allowed Indian religions to prevail, specially after the bitter lessons of the Mutiny, did not help to reform the various indigenous faiths. And while pretending to respect Indian susceptibilities, the rulers allowed the Hindu and Muhammadan laws to operate in the courts, thus helping to retain many of the antiquated and obsolete feudal customs, habits and traditions in a state of chronic putresence.

They discouraged the few individuals who wished to go beyond feudalist India, and alien Imperialist

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negation, to synthesise the best traditions of their native land with the most advanced scientific knowledge of the West. All social and political reforms were pooh-poohed. And the crisis of the spirit in the lives of the intelligentsia became harrowing in the extreme. Not only was there loss of liberty, but there was disruption and chaos all around. These conditions did not permit an easy synthesis. All the Indian values were ignored, and there seemed to be no way to redefine them or revitalise them under alien contempt and growing native neglect. The whole of Europe was an unknown quantity, real knowledge of which was censored by various ordinances.

The implications of this impact have been so wide and deep that we will have to study them in the pages that follow, in order to understand how difficult has been the task of the Indians of the contemporary period in seeking to define the hypotheses of a Contemporary Indian Civilisation.

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THE BRITISH NATIONALISM

ONE OF THE HIDDEN ASPECTS OF THE IMPACT of the West on India, which did not immediately reveal itself to the people, lay in the fact that the British had come to India, as the representatives of a highly organised nation.

I have already indicated how the three or four middle class revolutions in Great Britain had led to the industrial revolution, which brought in the machine power. What has to be emphasised is the fact that the invasion of India by the advance guard of the British nation was quite different from any other incursion which India had known before.

The hordes of Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Mongols and Pathans, who had descended upon India in the past were mainly poverty-stricken adventurers who had organised themselves into bands of robbers and brigands, and had wandered down south in search of food. The scarcity of easily available natural resources in their own lands and periodic drought were the driving force which impelled them to leave their homes. And though they were able to prevail over the more leisurely people, the blood-sucking wolves began to eat vegetables. The process of social adjustment was not always successful, but it was continuous.

But the tides which swept over from the West introduced new elements that sought neither adjustment nor allowed it. It was like a flood which swept over

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our whole country.

In its essence, it was a machine monster, hungry and greedy, not only for the fruits of the earth but for human flesh and blood.

What is more, the giant was blind — it was a montage man composed of neatly arranged screws and bolts, with commerce for one arm, and politics for another, diplomacy for a third and violence for a fourth. Already, it had reduced the natives of Great Britain into wage slavery, divided them into classes, bound them in the iron hoops of industry and made humanity into a marketable value. There was nothing 'of the divine image in this Goliath', as Rabindranath Tagore has put it, 'because it functioned with the highest efficiency'. The Indians could not even understand how this enormous square-cut demon had been manufactured. And, through the rise and fall of various civilisations, we had seen that man's instinctive and creative powers were not dammed up. Our social instincts were always allowed to be active within the framework of our homes and farms and workshop by the alien rulers.

We had known human races, strong and weak and cruel, but also merciful, unlike us and yet like us. But we had never known such a Demon as this 'Great British Nation'.

What was this Nation?

It was a peculiar product of the higher economic and political grouping of the people, organised by the class society, on the profit-making system, called capitalism,

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which wanted to pass off the burden of slavery from its own working and lower middle sections, because they struggled against economic servitude, and which, therefore, began to invest capital in the technically underdeveloped countries of the world, and assumed the form of a vast Imperialism.

As the British Nation was seeking self-preservation in this way, it could only become the instrument of power and not of human ideals. The organisation of this power, with the help of scientific knowledge of the renaissance in Europe, equipped it with amazing energy. And it conquered everything before it.

Only, it had other rivals in Europe, among the Dutch, the Portuguese, the French and the German nations. And although the British nation outfought most of its rivals, the greed for material prosperity, which was the cue for passion of all these neighbouring European societies, filled them all with mutual jealousy. And this brought obsessions of fear and hatred, based on suspicions, about who was growing more powerful and who was becoming less powerful. When the competition for power grew keener, the organisations for achieving supremacy grew vaster. And selfishness eigned everywhere. Military solutions, in the form of world wars, then became inevitable, crushing the remaining human values.

As this abstract monster began to rule India, the human touch was more or less lost. The rulers did not need to know our languages, values or faiths and lived secluded lives in their sequestered bungalows, except when they came out to govern. They hired wage slaves, whom they ordered about from a distance.

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The strange colour of their skins made them more remote, giving them the aura of beings of another world, frightening in their potencies. And the inhuman steel frame of officialdom which they evolved, made them more like the tyrannical demons of hell. They may have been sensitive to the personal love of the girls they had left behind. Certainly, the bulk of the ruling race was not in the least aware of the joys and sorrows of the inferior races, among whom they had come to live. Indeed, they promoted the myth of a superior ruling white race.

Unfortunately, for these rulers, the fertile Indian population were not merely, as the British thought, teeming millions, but individuals surviving from broken down ancient cultures, who could feel pain if you pricked them, who could smile if you tickled them, who could laugh at their own frailties as well as the absurdities of the rulers. The bloodless policies of British bureaucracy ignored this fact. For instance, the rulers threw millions of Indian weavers on the scrap heap of death, at one go, because the home market did not want any competition from the finest, Dacca muslins. And in this and similar ways the 'octopus of abstractions', which was the British nation spread its tentacles into the great spaces of India, sucked up the remotest and most inbred societies by the laws of its power and bleached the plains with the bones of the peasantry and craftsmen, generation after generation. The value of human personality, of individual life, the problem of its growth through education of the sensibility, and its betterment, were more or less forgotten. Colonies, though the liberals fought over

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them at home in Parliament, exploitation for gain, was all that mattered in the empire, and every instrument was organised for this purpose.

Although the British ruling classes perfected this concept of the capitalist nation and its main organ, Imperialism, the example was catching, at first throughout the West, but also in several parts of Asia. For instance, apart from the European nation-imperialisms, there soon arose in Asia itself, the Japanese nation-imperialism. The Samurai of the small islands in the north Pacific modelled themselves on the ruling classes of the small islands in the Atlantic, adopted the machine civilisation on the profit basis, and began, aggressively, to organise themselves into a military force which defeated the Czarist Russian nation-imperialism and conquered vast spaces in Asia, spreading death and destruction everywhere in the name of trade and co-prosperity.

The peoples of Great Britain, who had struggled against their ruling classes, had thrown up an important intelligentsia which protested against the capitalist machine civilisation and sought to wrest power from the conservative nationalist elements. The declassed intellectuals, with the help of the working people, succeeded in initiating the great socialist movement, which was to culminate in several victories for the labour movement from the early 20th century onwards. But the surplus money of British Imperialism had already corrupted the lower middle classes and had given them a limited stake in the profit system, upset their balance and knit them together under the shadow of the mechanised organisation of the Empire, until

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they aped the example of the upper classes.

The epidemic of evil, the concept of the nation state, had thus spread into almost every corner of the world, and its microbes of greed and selfishness began to eat into the vital life of man, until fear, suspicion and hatred and unhealthy competition created the atmosphere for more aggrandisement. In this atmosphere, the humanitarian labour movements were defeated and capitalism armed itself to the teeth. The First World War between the Germans and the British Imperialists involved half mankind, because these two rivals were struggling on the one side to gain more colonies, and on the other, to defend what they had. In one country, socialism broke through from the orbit of national capitalist Imperialism and the Soviet State was established, under the leadership of a socialist intelligentsia in league with the workers. But the lesson of the Russian revolution was not heeded and the cult of the nation grew all around, accumulating to itself more power and higher efficiency even in Russia. Monopoly capitalism appeared, in its most intense form, as fascism in Italy, Germany and Japan, insolently challenging the rival imperialisms, as well as the socialist society of the U.S.S.R. The final reckoning between the rival imperialisms could not be prevented, in spite of an awakened world intelligentsia and the almost universal growth of socialist consciousness. The Second bloody World War involved the whole of humanity and decimated millions of homes, apart from bringing torture and death and utter misery to the human family.

Although the force of the concept of the 'nation-

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state-imperialism ' has expanded itself to a large extent, and nationalism, as the desire for freedom from foreign rule of the many peoples of Asia, has prospered, and half the world has gone socialist, the dynamic, violent and restless surviving European imperialisms, in alliance with the economic and militarist imperialism of America, are now threatening the entire world, because they do not want socialism, in its communist form, or even in its democratic forms, to be established in the newly liberated countries of Asia, Africa and South America. Some of the intellectuals of these Imperialist countries, though liberal, suspect the welfare state to be the source of totalitarianism. And to escape responsibility for the aggressiveness of their politicians talk of the values beyond, ' need ', of the search for significance and quality in a life beyond welfare. We have no doubt that the lessons of the brave thoughts of the liberal and socialist intelligentsia of Western Europe, specially Great Britain, have been the main source of enlightenment among us in India. But those of our intellectuals who have learnt the true lessons of democratic freedom from the West, have had to learn these in spite of the British nation. The love, the hospitality, and the personal friendships we enjoyed in Great Britain were always accompanied by insults from Imperialism. At any rate, we all know, how the organised might of the Western nations acts like an invisible wall, checking the free flow of European scientific and humanitarian culture into the colonial or excolonial countries of Asia and Africa. And it is significant that if India became free, it was because of the moral strength of the Indian liberation movement,

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in alliance with those men of conscience in the British liberal and labour movements whose humanity had remained intact, in spite of the corrosive forces prevailing in the great British nation.

Some of us are aware of the dangers of the infectious disease of the aggressive nation, catching the rich in our own country. Unfortunately, the only gift that the ruthless British power gave to India was in terms of a rigorous law and order. The milk of human kindness, by way of education, had run dry on the shrivelled breasts of the British nation. As for the life-giving impulses of health, there was never any money from the gains of exploitation. And we have inherited, in spite of the fundamental belief in non-violence of our leadership, the bureaucracy, the army, the police, the C.I.D., and the power of the preventive detention acts, as well as a 19th century capitalist mentality, in spite of the fact that the present day ruling circles were brought up on the self-giving doctrines of Mahatma Gandhi.

Still, since the transfer of power from British to Indian hands, our people have sought to bring some humanity into the atrophied roots of the steel frame of the bureaucracy. We have tried to put some tenderness into the eyes of the machine monster of capitalist civilisation, left among us, by putting heart into the wielders of the machine, in so far as we have sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to covert the new industrial economy into a 'Socialist Pattern of Society', for the good of the men, women and children of a vast population. Our enlightened Prime Minister has spoken against aggressive nationalism, rather than assume

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the same iron coat of mail of the still rampant Imperialisms of the world. We have tried not to join the brotherhood of 'modern hooliganism and loot', as Rabindranath Tagore called it, but have expressed a tentative belief that all the peoples of the world might be left free to develop their physical, moral and intellectual resources, not against each other, in 'the wrestling match of powerfulness' of the various heads of states, armed with atomic weapons, but in the new brotherhood of co-existence, in spite of differences of social and political systems, so that the world might survive the present atomic stockpiles of armaments, into the future.

We appeal, not from smug complacency, but from the position of people who were condemned to disregard our own humanity for more than two hundred years, to the peoples of the West to give up the cult for more and more hats, coats, shoes, houses, and motor-cars only for themselves but poverty for the black, brown and yellow peoples of the world. And we refuse to participate in the campaigns of the surviving Imperialists for keeping down the helpless peoples of Africa in the lust for profits and power. We say that the myth of the nation as German nationalism has promoted it for more than half a century is the greatest evil of the modern world. And we feel that a commonwealth of humanity has to be created by equitable sharing of basic wordly goods. We are pained by the self righteousness of the moralists of the West who consider socialism to be the source of tyranny and lies and who regard the communists as a mere species of pariahs.

We contend that the present cold war, between

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the highly armed nations of the West and the communist half of the world, makes a caricature of our hopes, because it threatens to engulf the world in a final total war. And we suggest that the resources, made available by the near perfection of science, could be used for building up the havenots of the world, if even five per cent of these resources can be spent on peace time reconstruction rather than on instruments for a deadly war. As the reconstruction may be on other lines than those preferred by the Monopoly capitalists, there is no real response from the Imperialists.

In the great choice between fanatical narrow nationalism, built on profits for one people against the other, on gluttony and the new god, ' high standard of living ', and the distribution of the resources of the one world to all its peoples, we prefer the life-giving impulse which says that the unfit will not go to the wall, that they shall not die. We feel that policies which lead to social and economic welfare do indeed make for internal awakening, because the education and the health of the individual is in itself the path to the search for all those values which go to make the whole man. And thus we believe that those who refuse to consider human ' needs ', as values, unconsciously promote the economic doctrine of ' the survival of the fittest ', refuse the opportunity for the renewal of mankind — and of helping the individual to become a whole man. The preachers of a closed spiritual life thus end up as the enemies of the struggle against the odds of building up, and the removal of all those lesser pains, which may become the task of the future leisure society growing through self-giving human impulses.

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The poet Rabindranath Tagore warned the aggressive nations of the world, from the midst of the First World War, of the nemesis awaiting them if they pursued only profit and power. This warning fell on deaf ears in the West. But it is important to restate it if the shoots of tenderness are to be allowed to grow and survive in the world community, in any ass[illegible]tion for the creative life, for beauty, love and hum[illegible] solidarity:

> 'This progress of power attains more and more rapidity of pace', said Tagore. 'And for the reason that it is a detached part of man, it soon outruns the complete humanity. ... Thus man, with his mental and material power, far outgrowing his material strength, is like an exaggerated giraffe, whose head has certainly shot up miles away from the rest of him, making normal communications difficult to be established. This greedy head, with his huge dental organisation, has been munching all the topmost foliage of the world. But the nourishment is too late in reaching his digestive organs, and his heart is suffering from want of blood. Of this present disharmony in man's nature, the West seems to have been blissfully unconscious. The enormity of its material success has diverted all its attention towards self-congratulation in its bulk. ... It is superficial enough to think that all tomorrows are merely todays.'

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Christianity

The second great influence, which came with the British from the West, was Christianity.

Unfortunately, the padres of the Christian church were mostly of the same colour as the white Sahibs, who ruled the country. And the first impression was created that there had come, from the West, two weapons to destroy the Indians — the sword and the cross.

So the influence of the great religion of Christianity was very meagre among the educated classes, though some of the lower sections of the population, specially those who suffered from the discrimination of the caste order, accepted the Christian faith.

The practical social ethic of the Christians had some effects on the people, in so far as the missionaries founded schools and colleges, hospitals, orphanages and other social welfare centres. The Hindu, Muslim, the Sikh and the Parsee religions began to emulate the example of these missionaries, by founding institutions of this kind of their own, both through imitation of Christian ideals and as the means of countering the influence of the Christian Church among their own followers. Therefore, though the greater attention paid to the welfare institutions by the missionaries remained an object lesson to the other faiths, the influence of their proselytising was soon checked.

On the doctrinal side, the narrowness of Christianity, contrasted unfavourably with the comprehensive, rather closely knit, philosophies of the Hindus. The Western Christian said: God had sent his only son Jesus to suffer for humanity and to intercede, on behalf of

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mankind, for salvation. The Hindus and the Muslims, as well as Sikhs, could not believe that Jesus was 'the only son of God', but considered Jesus as one of the many prophets of mankind. The Hindus, particularly, did not believe in the finality of any one revelation.

Also, the Christian Church talked of the two motifs of human action, hunger and love, as the fundamental sources of human co-operation in the material world; but, so far as India was concerned, in actual practice, the Christians separated these two motifs from each other. Love, as implied in the sharing of life, was considered self-transcending and was insisted upon as a way of self-realisation. But the missionaries did not link this love motif with the satisfaction of the hunger motif. And to the extent to which Indian Christianity constantly preached that love integrates and unites human beings, but did nothing very much to help the poor flock in its struggle to satisfy the hunger motive, Christianity tended to become in India more and more a religion of escape from the servitude of the caste order.

This historical transformation of the teaching of Jesus, who had chased the money changers out of the arena and struggled against the Roman Empire, led to the falsification of the words and meanings of Christianity, particularly in its Protestant form. And only a few radical padres, like C. F. Andrews, Edward Thompson and Pandita Rama Bai, who allied themselves with the cause of Indian freedom and social reform, were listened to. The Jesuits of the Catholic Church brought a culturally richer form of Christianity than the Protestants, and the Catholic missionaries

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always seemed more ready to live brave lives in the interior under the most arduous conditions. But the inherent inability of the Catholic Church, with its centre in Rome, to sanction those pagan practices which lingered in the Indian racial unconscious with the ever present cosmogony of 'dark gods', made even this form of Christianity, compare unfavourably with Hinduism, which was all-inclusive even though caste-ridden.

The early Christian Church, founded in south-west India, by St. Thomas, achieved more success, because it made the belief in God involve, among other things, the capacity to live as a part of the whole of things, in a world which was one. But, even in the south, socialism was to prove to be a greater challenge than Christianity, because, in spite of its puritanical ethic, it seemed to recapture for men the capacity to live as a part of things, that is to say, it united the motives of hunger and love. In vain does the Catholic Church warn the people of the dangers of totalitarianism, when it refuses to incorporate the well being of people as an important part of its teaching and considers 'needs' to be only a relative factor in the aspirations of men.

Thus the Christian religion, which had, in Europe, a vital social ethic, failed in India to convert the whole population, or even a large part of it. And the Indian intelligentsia was forced to take not from the Christians of the affluent societies, but from the early Christians, those doctrines which suited their own purpose, in promoting the mental and material well being and social security of all citizens, without embracing the

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kingdom of heaven as European Christianity had proclaimed it.

Threatened on all sides, the Christian Church now tends to repeat the scriptures. 'Greater things than these shall ye do', Jesus had said. 'We are workers together with God', St. Paul had said. And the welfare work of the Christians is often inspired by these words. But, at the same time, the missionaries and the vassal churches of the Pope, as well as the branches of the Church of England owned by Great Britain, spend vast sums in combating freedom and socialism, even as they subsidise denominational education which preaches the values of the false gods of Capitalism. So while the more honest missionaries work selflessly in the villages, the source of their money power is tainted. Thus instead of the truth that, 'And God created man in his own image', the compromisers of both the Catholic and Protestant Church make man in the image of Cardinal Spellman, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, who hold the purse strings and sometimes back the bomb, advising mankind that the promised destruction of the world is at hand and should be welcomed.

As long as the organised Churches connive at the continuance, by many of their heads, of social injustice, suppression of freedom, and racial inequality, they cannot hope to convert the oppressed in the many parts of the world to the belief in the healing balm of Christianity.

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The Indian Intelligentsia and the Struggle for Freedom

In spite of the excruciating ordeal which Indian society had to undergo to adapt itself to the changes brought in by the British, some of the foremost leaders of Indian thought began to study the intellectual, social and political problems at issue before them. There were those among them who harked back to the past and wanted to revive it entire, with their great nostalgia for a vanished golden age. There were some others, who had forgotten the past and wished to bury all that remained of it, and go forward to the new publicity-stimulated, gadget-mongering civilisation of the West. They were a few, however, who began the more difficult task of synthesis, of trying to inherit from the past some of the remnants of traditional values which were still operative and seeking to fit them into the modern perspective. These last rejected the superficial British Indian system of education, probed the philosophies and social systems of Europe to accept those impulses from the West which might be absorbed into Indian polity.

The essential nature of all the reactions of the Indian intelligentsia, of a hundred years ago, was mainly political. On account of the official prohibition, the most important leaders often expressed themselves in religious terms, or through pamphlets on social reform or merely as logic-chopping intellectuals. But the fundamental urge behind a few of their protests was political. In this sense, it may be said, that there has been no important intellectual of the last five or six generations in India who did not include political cause in his

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work, for life in India is politics and politics is life. And politics itself has been compounded of socio-economic and cultural urges, as well as of ideas based on facts. It is true, that the ideas seem often to be more important than the facts, because the ideas have remained valid, even when the movements founded on the facts were crushed by authority, or failed for lack of cohesion among the protagonists. All the same, it was the combination of ideas and facts which was to lead to the freedom of India from foreign rule. And, curiously, it was the combination of ideology in action in certain individuals that made the most important Indians of the 19th and 20th centuries into *examples*. Those who merely held on to ideas failed as miserably as those who acted blindly without thought. But the few who integrated ideas and acts and who were dedicated and gave themselves, against those who withheld themselves, won leadership. This was inevitable in a country where a small self-educated intelligentsia had to teach the illiterate masses and carry the people along. In India, when the medieval doctrinal faith had really broken down it needed a good railway engine to pull a large number of goods wagons behind it.

The basic fact which seems to have provided the cue for passion of the intelligentsia, was the Imperialist denial of the right of the Indian people to affirm their personality on any plane, and the denigration of the values of Indian literature, art and culture. The political and economic relations of the British and the Indians were, for nearly 200 years, those of masters and slaves. So it was very seldom possible for the

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British to meet the Indians (except the sycophants), on the basis of friendship and mutual esteem.

The chief controversy through which these differences came to a head centred, as I have mentioned before, round Lord Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education*, in which he had declared the bulk of the classical literature of India in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, as well as in the modern languages, ' to be fit only for the waste paper basket '. He had further proclaimed that ' what Greek and Latin had been in civilising barbaric Russia, so the English language would be in civilising the Indians '. And on the basis of these formulations he had recommended the adoption of the English language as the via media for education in the British Indian universities, which were soon to be founded.

This dictum of Lord Macaulay split the intelligentsia into two camps: the Orientalists (including a number of Englishmen), who wanted only the classical languages of India and the vernaculars to be taught in the universities; and the Occidentalists, who wanted, both the Indian learning as well as those parts of the renaissance enlightenment of Europe which Macaulay had not dreamt of giving to the Indian youth.

The differences were magnified by the fact that the shop-keeping East India Company officials, their soldiers, contractors and missionaries, were in a hurry to make money, to buy and sell and preach and civilise, while the indigenous population, weak and debilitated through conquest, could only obey. The Westerners seemed to be only aware of differences of beliefs, customs and clothes and food, but did not have time to look for the reasons why human beings in India preferred

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their peculiar way of life. Of course, the Indians were not supposed to be human, but merely coolies. The Ferungies had little time to read the books of the natives, to hear their songs or to understand their religions.

These prejudices were mitigated, to some extent, by pioneer English orientalists, whose curiosity was aroused and who took up studies in philology, history and philosophy in a dispassionate manner and undertook the translation of important texts.

Actually, Warren Hastings, one of the first Governors-General of the East India Company, whose political attitudes and personal corruption were typical of the many agents of John Company of the time, became a patron of oriental learning, and showed a deep interest in the legal systems of the Hindus and the Muslims.

Sir Charles Wilkins (1750-1836), another employee of the John Company, invented and cast printing types of Persian and Bengali alphabets, translated the *Gita* into English, and rendered the tales of the *Hitopadesa*. He was one of the first Europeans to study ancient inscriptions.

Sir William Jones (1746-1813), linguist, lawyer and Sanskrit scholar, translated the history of Nadir Shah from Persian to French, at the age of 24. He founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and translated Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. In collaboration with Pandit Radha Kant Sharma, he also rendered the *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa into English.

Henry Colebrooke (1765-1837), became one of the first scholars of Sanskrit and founded the Royal Asiatic

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Society of Great Britain in 1823.

William Carey (1761-1834), a Christian missionary, translated the *Bible* into Bengali and founded the agri-horticultural society of India and also established a society for education of Indian women.

John Gilchrist, of the company's medical service, published, during the years 1787-1790, the *English-Hindustani Dictionary*, which he had compiled with the help of Mir Amman of Delhi.

Father Thomas Stephens sought the help of some Saraswat Brahmins of Goa, learnt Sanskrit, Marathi and Konkani, and wrote the first grammar of an Indian language by a European.

James Princep deciphered the Ashokan inscriptions in 1837.

These, and other learned orientalists, certainly impressed the Indian intelligentsia, but remained exceptions to the general run of the Company's officials, who naturally came, not to interpret cultures but to find political and military solutions for economic gain. And the behaviour of these representatives of the great British nation was surpassed by the racial hatred of the planters and settlers, and the religious fanaticism of the semi-educated missionaries, and the overall exploitation by all.

Certainly, however, the admirable work of the orientalists tended to make the Indians among the occidentalists intensely self-conscious.

Undoubtedly, most of the well-to-do natives took to English education in the universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, which had become full-fledged institutions by 1857, because of the lucrative employ-

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ment possible through association with the East India Company. These men did not know very much of India's past and seldom realised that they would lose their cultural identity with the loss of economic and political freedom. They found rationalisations for their collaboration with the British in the cliche that 'politics is against the spiritual life', that the authorities stand for 'gradual education of Indians towards self-governing institutions', and that the Indians, were 'slavish' anyhow.

The might of the Company had persuaded several people to become unpatriotic time-servers and money grabbers and hangers-on of the ruling power. And although they professed the Western way of life, and excused their alliance with authority in the name of liberal education, they merely became hybrid products of the British-Indian Universities, because these places had been designed merely as machines for producing the kind of clerks and the lower ranks of the professional services whom the British preferred as cadres for their services.

There were a few eminent Indians, who had realised that some aspects of our traditional religions had reached the lowest depths of decay in meaningless rituals. And they accepted Christianity as a rationalisation of their personal predicaments. Men like Lala Bihari Dey, K. M. Bannerji and Govind Dutt, were not the kind of men who were swayed by the mere glamour of the white Sahib's life in being converted to Christianity.

Above them all, however, were the band of self-conscious and enlightened Indians, who knew that

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the British were not the only Europeans, and that, beyond the Imperialist's contempt, there was the whole achievement of European science and illumination.

Some of them had heard of or read Bacon, Harvey, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, Boyle, Locke, Spinoza, Lovisier, Dalton, Kant, Hegel, Diderot, Voltaire and the rest. They also understood the reasons for the political weaknesses of the country and of its mental disintegration. And they took the attitude of an advance guard, mostly on their own, and sometimes together.

Already, Tafazzul-Hussain Khan of Calcutta, an official of Nawab Asaf-ul-Daula, had translated Newton's *Principia* into Persian, and attempted to translate other well-known mathematical works from English.

Mirza Abu Talib Khan (1752-1807), born in Lucknow of Turkish and Persian parentage, came to the court of the Nawab of Bengal, accompanied an Englishman to Europe at the age of forty, realised the importance of sea power eighty years before Mahan's classical work on this subject, and asserted that the economic disparity between the ruling classes and the masses militates against material development and cultural progress.

The Reverend Krishna Mohan Bannerji had edited the first Encyclopedia, *Vidya Kal Padruma*, in thirteen volumes in Bengal by 1850. Ishwar Chander Vidyasagar, (1820-1891), one of the first Indians to evolve modern Bengali prose, was the pioneer of progressive thought, and his importance as a forward intellectual has not even yet been realised in India.

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Henry Derozio, a Eurasian, infused a new spirit of rebellion among the educated youth of Bengal.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873), rendered the epic *Ramayana* into English.

Bankim Chander Chatterji was the first great novelist of modern India, who wielded the Bengali language as a powerful medium for the presentation of human and political truth.

Sir Syed Ahmed (1817-1898), was the most forward Muhammadan of his time, in so far as he castigated his co-religionists for their intellectual backwardness and led them to accept education, against which they had reacted because of their political defeat at the hands of the British.

The most important of these pioneers, was, however, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who may be called the 'father of the Indian renaissance', and the founder of India's modern self-consciousness. The vision of this great man is clearly evident from the stand he took on the new policy of education.

> 'If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge', he wrote to Lord Amherst, 'the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to replace the system of the schoolmen, which was best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened

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system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning, educated in Europe and providing a college, furnished with necessary books, implements and other apparatus.'

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was not a machine-mongering prophet. He knew Sanskrit, Bengali and English, had a smattering of Greek, and was, in every sense of the word, a man of wide learning, varied experience and extra-ordinary vision, who wished to take over what was life-giving in the matrix of Western civilisation. And his attitude was symptomatic of an important section of society, which was wedded to religious and social reform, as well as to an objective outlook towards Europe. And it was through his impulse and the activities of a number of men of like mind all over India, that several new religious bodies were founded.

In 1816, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Atmaya Sabha. In 1828 came the allied Brahmo Samaj. In 1839 was founded Devendranath Tagore's Tatwa Bhodhani Sabha. In 1867, was established the Prtahna Samaj in Bombay. In 1875, the Arya Samaj came into existence. In 1879, the Theosophical Society was established in Madras. Later, came the Muslim Ahmadiya Reform Movement in Punjab, and the Ramakrishna-Vivekanand, a Hindu reform movement in Bengal.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the first Indians who travelled to Europe. As the boat in which he was travelling berthed at Marseilles, he saw a ship

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flying the flag of the French revolution. He immediately insisted on being transported there, to salute the symbol of liberty, fraternity and equality. Actually, he had gone to London as the Ambassador of the king of Delhi in the attempt to appeal, on behalf of the Mughal dynasty, over the heads of the directors of the East India Company, to the British King. Naturally, his mission was resented by the John Company, his person assailed and his work made impossible.

But Ram Mohan Roy had gone not merely as a representative of the Mughal dynasty. He made friends with the unitarian Christians and accepted the truth, wherever he found it, an attitude which was incorporated into the Brahmo Samaj. Further he compaigned against the burning of widows, and, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore [who was to be his chief disciple] Ram Mohan Roy was 'the first man, and the greatest, who realised the truth...which had been proclaimed in the shade of India's forest solitudes, the truth of the unity of all mankind'.

This great Indian, and citizen of the world, died in Bristol, in 1833, and his work was carried on by the Tagore family, both in pursuing the reforms which were nearest to his heart and in clarifying the outlooks of the people about the confusions which then beset India, morally and politically.

Ostensibly, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's political mission, on behalf of the Mughal dynasty, to be recognised as the Sovereign power, failed. But the embers of revolt, which he had ignited among the Indians, were to burst out in the first war of Indian Independence, which was then called the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Before this

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great event, the British had crushed the Sikh States of the Punjab in the two battles of 1845 and 1848, and its armies had swept everything before them in southern and western India. 1857 thus marked the end of the first phase of Indian political awareness.

In 1885, started the second phase, when the Indian National Congress was founded. During the first thirty years of this phase, the movements continued to have a programme for constitutional reform on liberal lines. But at the close of the century, the radical wing of the Congress, led by men like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, sought to use direct action against the British power, on the lines of the American civil war, to secure Swaraj, which was proclaimed to be 'the birthright of every Indian'. The British power ignored the liberals and violently crushed the radicals.

The vacuum was filled in the early years of the 20th century by a totally unknown man, M. K. Gandhi, who had practised Tolstoyan ideas of non-violence in South Africa against the white discrimination before the First World War. Gandhi had read Ruskin's *Unto the Last*. And this, he says, brought, 'an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life. I could not sleep that night. I determined to change my life in the light of that book.' He has put down the sum of what he has learnt in his *Autobiography*: 'The good of the individual is contained in the good of all. A lawyer's labour has the same value as a barber's in as much as all have the same right to earning their livelihood from their labour. A life of labour, that is to say, of the tiller of the soil, and handicraftsman, is a life worth living.'

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These three principles, in spite of many contradictions brought by political exigencies, dominated him throughout his life. And he tried to reduce these principles to practice.

During the Boer war in South Africa, when the Boers were fighting the British for independence, he sided with the British, because he then believed that the British Empire existed for the welfare of the world. He even raised an ambulance unit during the Zulu rebellion of 1907, and tended the wounded, only to learn that repression can be as bad as war, in so far as it becomes a man hunt. Thus he realised not only the value of the ancient Indian doctrine of compassion, but knowing that his struggle through life would be hard, he tried to achieve complete self control through *Brahmacharya*, abstinence from sex and the temptations of sex. Thus, he experimented with *Satyagraha*, which he understood as 'soul force' or 'truth force' in his own and in his followers' struggle against the humiliating restrictions placed on Indians by the South African Government.

The genius of Gandhi lay not so much in his doctrines, which are often inconsistent, but in the uncanny manner in which he could feel the pulse of the masses and ally himself with them.

On his return to India, he gave up the European style of life, which he had cultivated as a law student in London and deliberately adopted a peasant's life and outlook. He denounced the town life, and began to live in a village, thus evolving his ideas of a new peasant civilisation, in accord with the life of India's seven hundred thousand villages. And he picked up

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the philosophy and traditional knowledge of the folk, which had come down from father to son, and son to son, as an amalgam of the truths of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain thought. And, curiously, he discovered certain simple techniques of protest against the alien authority, which were rooted in the peasant consciousness, like the symbolic fasts he observed, which derived from the ancient custom of *Dharna*, which literally means gripping or seizing. The aggrieved person used to sit fasting at the door of a man who had wronged him, until death released him from his penances. As there was no way of joining issue with British rule, Gandhi adopted a kind of *Dharna*, or passive resistance, sometimes reinforced by fast, and sat on the threshold of the British Empire in India. If he had died through one of these fasts, he felt that the conscience of the British would be stirred. And if he survived, he knew that the people would rally around him, as he had taken their sufferings onto himself. Gandhi's *Dharna* was influenced by his knowledge of passive resistance of the non-conformists against Mr. Balfour's Education Act, and the hunger strike of the English women suffragettes and the Irish rebels.

It is, however, in the wider context of *Satyagraha*, or soul force, that the practical implications of *Dharna* must be understood. Gandhi expected from himself, and from all those who offered *Satyagraha*, complete truthfulness and integrity. And he broadened the concept to include Civil Disobedience, which meant the refusal to pay taxes or to co-operate with the Government by taking service under it. And he considered non-violence as a weapon of civil disobedience. The

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idea of non-violence may have derived from Tolstoy, but it had profound affinities with *Ahimsa*, harmlessness, which Gandhi interpreted as non-violence.

These doctrines actually took shape through the trials and errors of the campaigns he launched, from before the First World War till the Second World War. The concept of non-violence was so directly opposed to the cult of violence of the West, and to the brutality of the British authorities in India, that it seemed to assume a dramatic character. It is likely that he himself and Vinobha Bhave were the only persons who succeeded in being truly non-violent, while their followers often gave way to coercive acts against the provocations. But as some of the physically strongest peoples of India began to accept, on their bodies and minds, punishment at the hands of the police, the doctrine seems to have been adopted by more people than world opinion was inclined to believe.

The most effective criticism of Gandhi's doctrine of *Ahimsa*, which has been offered, is that by the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who was a devoted friend and admirer, but sometimes differed from the Mahatma in his role as an intellectual.

> 'I believe,' the poet wrote in 1922 in reply to an open letter received by him, 'in the efficacy of *Ahimsa*, as the means of overcoming the congregated might of physical force on which the political powers in all countries mainly rest. But like every other moral principle, *Ahimsa* has to spring from the depth of the mind. And it must not be forced upon men from some outside appeal of urgent need. The

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great personalities of the world have preached love, forgiveness and non-violence, primarily for the sake of spiritual perfection and not for the attainment of some immediate success in politics or other similar departments of life. They were aware of the difficulty of their teachings being realised within a fixed period of time in a sudden and wholesale manner by men whose previous course of life had chiefly pursued the course of self. No doubt through a strong compulsion of desire for some external result, men are capable of repressing their habitual inclinations for a limited time, but when it concerns an immense multitude of men of different traditions, and stages of culture, and when the object for which such repression is exercised, needs a prolonged period of struggle, complex in character, I cannot think it possible of attainment.'

This does not mean that Rabindranath Tagore objected to Mahatma Gandhi's personal fasts. Nor that he subscribed to violence. He felt that *Ahimsa* was too idealistic a doctrine to succeed in impressing the beef-eating British, who had won their Empire mostly by force and fraud. It is true that there were some among the British at home who felt guilty about the misdeeds perpetrated by their brethren in India. But Tagore believed that it would not be the uneasy conscience of a few Britishers, which would bring India freedom, but the logic of events. And he deplored the mendicancy of Indian politics, through which, he felt, Indian politicians always begged for freedom from the Government, tried to coerce it and became merely

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opposition minded, then rejected the boons which were granted as inadequate, and again launched appeals, renewing the cycle of penances, extracted boons and despair. It was Tagore's firm conviction that freedom would not come merely as a gift from the British, but from the resilience of the spirit of the people from within themselves, and their self-dependence, until the Sarkar could not oppose them. For Tagore believed in the life of the individual even more than Gandhi; and to the poet the unity of nature and village life was more real than to the politician, who encouraged the capitalists even as he preached the values of cooperation to small communities.

The series of non-violence campaigns, the mass arrests that followed, and the launchings of the campaigns, or their withdrawal by Mahatma Gandhi, continued as a chain of actions and reactions between the British Government and the Indian National Movement, until the year 1942, when the Mahatma announced his 'Quit India' Campaign against the British. As usual, the British authorities interned the leadership for the duration of the war. The people became violent in protest and an underground struggle proceeded until the end of the war in 1945.

The issue on which the Indian National Congress had launched its last great campaign was that, if the Second World War was being fought for the defence of freedom against fascist domination and racism, then India was willing to co-operate in the war effort to achieve victory against the fascists. The British Government did not concede freedom to India, but sought to divide the Hindus and Muhammadans and to

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keep all vetoing power in the hands of the Viceroy at the centre. The authorities used India's manpower in the mercenary army in the fight against Hitler, brought untold misery through famine in Bengal and frustrated all attempts of the Indian people to find a way out. The clash was, therefore, inevitable. And Gandhi had only provided the outer symbol in the slogan, 'Quit India'. As the violence piled up on violence through the offensives and counter-offensives of the warring powers, the doctrine of non-violence seemed to assume a world-wide significance. There were always some English intellectuals, who having revolted against the horrors of the Industrial civilisation, had a secret hankering for a peaceful village life. They ate vegetables and did charity and longed for a secure existence, based on family gains, without any further clashes of class, in the framework of village harmony. As this kind of idyllic society was not available in the West, they looked for it in a mythical East, not realising that in the villages of Asia the wretchedness of the poor peasants has reached beyond wretchedness. And yet these anarchists, pacifists and utopians, were the only sympathisers Gandhi could find in the West, because at least they had grasped the reasons for the decay of Western civilisation, and were not afraid of launching the most direct criticism of the violent machine age.

The peoples of India, who had been struggling for generations against tyranny, showed fight. The peasant movement had already become a strong factor in the Indian National struggle. The All-India Trade Union Congress had launched several campaigns and nurtured socialist consciousness through the years.

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There was a younger wing of the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, who were avowedly socialist in their aims and perspectives. This wing had even evolved positive constructive plans for India's economic and social development long before Independence was won. Their sympathies were for democracy against fascism. The example of these younger leaders had swept the students, the fighting forces, and the peasants and the workers into action, even when the Congress leadership was confined to jail. The formation of the Indian National Army by Subhas Bose from among the prisoners of war, fired the imagination of the soldiers engaged in the British war effort. The naval ratings and officers revolted against colour discrimination by the British officers, in Bombay harbour in 1945. The threat of an all India strike was in the offing. At this stage, the labour Government, which had succeeded the arch Imperialist Churchill, made an offer to transfer power to the Indian National Movement, and to the Muslims, led by M. A. Jinnah, on the basis of the partition of India into Bharat and Pakistan. The division of the country was resented by the Congress leaders, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with nationalist Muslims against the British and their ally, the separtist leader, Jinnah. Ultimately, however, as there was no other alternative, India accepted partition rather than live in slavery. The division of the country led to the most gruesome and horrible fratricide, both in the Punjab, which was arbitrarily split, with the heads of the rivers on one side and the torsoes on the other, and in Bengal, which was truncated in the most inglorious fashion. Freedom

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came to India, while the bitterness and suffering continued the memories of alien rule right into our own generation.

Although Indian nationalism represented the urge for freedom against foreign domination, while the European nationalism had represented the urge for self-aggrandisement of the greedy nations of the West, the purity of motives in India was also sullied by the incoming of selfishness, opportunism and jobbery among the leading cadres of both the new nations of India and Pakistan, which were founded on the debris of British rule.

The exploitation of the sub-continent had left a heritage of ruin, in so far as the social revolution had been deliberately halted. And, although, like other countries of the East, we had emerged into the second half of the 20th century, we were supposed to be lotus eaters, with a vast, rich culture, without any interest in modernity. We were supposed to be opposed to the machines, ineffectual, inefficient and otherworldly. And the prophets of doom told us that we would not be able to carry on even for a day when and if the British left. The course of the events has revealed something different. We realised that we had been left behind technically, in spite of the rapid increase of our industries by Indian entrepreneurs. We were also short of capital investment, and we did not enjoy the social amenities of 20th century civilisation. All the same, we had already outlined for ourselves, our ideas of progress, through a parliamentary democracy, accompanied by a series of Five Year Plans, which would carry the social revolution forward. And the

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genius of the heir of Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, who has remained Prime Minister of this country now for 16 years, experimented with certain forms and ideas about the real creative life of the individual which may, in spite of the present chaos produced by imitation Fords and Rockefellers, be said to have laid the basis of a new unique Indian Contemporary Civilisation, to be realised through a synthesis of the surviving traditional values of India and some of the techniques of the West.

Whether this new civilisation can be achieved or not, we shall ask a little later. Meanwhile, let us examine the traditional values more precisely and see to what extent they have survived in our midst.

The Surviving Traditional Values

What are the traditional values if any, which have survived in their residual forms, into the present period?

There are roughly three main traditional values, which seem to me to have survived from the past:

(*a*) Universalism;
(*b*) Intolerant-tolerance;
(*c*) Compassion.

But are these values operative? And, if so to what extent?

As I shall show later, they are not operative values in the completest sense. But, because of the great weight of the past on the Indian conscience, they play some part in moulding our people, especially the vast

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illiterate population, which has inherited the past in the form of custom and convention, so that it is still comparatively inaccessible to Western modes of propaganda, through newspapers, radio and television.

Somehow, there has survived a vast amount of floating past knowledge, myth, legend, proverb, folk tale, magic, superstition and prejudice, which carries the emotions of the ancient times to the present days and tends to become part of our history. Of course, under the peculiar conditions of India, where history was seldom written, until the modern period, we have to stretch the European definition of history, to include all the current mental and material attitudes which have been inherited, even in their prutrescent forms, into our present day thinking, so that we can choose those surviving good habits which may help us to keep the continuity of Indian creativeness. One of the facts, which seems to be constant, through the tangled skein of many events in our past history, is that our people continued to be creative while dynasties came and dynasties went, in the main cities. This creativeness was often the attempt at emotional survival against the *Sankalpa*, or the pain, of outer events. Sometimes it took the form of genuine renewal of living impulses; at other times it was merely repetitious revival: and still at other times it took the form of renascent efforts, especially under the patronage of the upper orders. But as the poet, Iqbal, once said, while Greece and Rome had perished in the form in which they had flourished, the old civilisation of India has survived to the present day, though in a somewhat broken state. Our past seems to be like an old tree,

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which has put on new leaves for every generation, as though to give the people the shelter of its protection against the inclemencies of the weather. And, though this tree is very withered and hoary, we have found that it has thrown roots from above, as though accepting life impulses from wherever they came. So that when we want to find our roots, we don't generally have to dig up the earth, but we can also find them coming down from the air, as it were. At any rate, we do look to the past for inspiration and often tend to cover up the weaknesses of our present by exalting the past. This habit is not a good one, since it often inflates our vanity. And we tend to build processes, on the basis of our alleged spiritual achievements, and go into the modern world with false assumptions. And, it is not very honest to accept all the surviving forms and ideas, if they do not apply or are not useful for today. Certainly, it is dishonest to arrogate to ourselves airs of importance on the possession of traditional values which are supposed to be intact among us, though we know that many of them are certainly not operative now. We have to study our heritage, to analyse it, find out the facts on which our various patterns of culture were built, and take only those values which have some social basis today, and which can help us to go forward.

Let us look at the three traditional values I have mentioned above, and let us see what form they have taken in our modern period?

UNIVERSALISM: The first value, Universalism was implicit in our culture from the earliest times. The

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probable sources of this affirmation lay in the vast landscapes which confronted the first incomers. Some of the earliest poetry of India in the Vedic hymns, about 1500 years before Christ, is symptomatic of the simple universal values of mankind, in their worship of nature and in their bold, speculative outlook about the meaning of creation. It is almost as though men discovered not one part of the world but the whole cosmos for the first time. And the rhythms and cadences of the early hymns flow like the first tides of human consciousness towards the highest truths, necessary to dispel the surrounding darkness. They express some of the noble aspirations of man for the one world of thought and experience. Often, the truths sought are merely local and take the form of hunches, vague feelings and outpourings of men, spellbound with fear of the opposing elements. But, here and there the poets break through, as in the hymn of creation, in the *Rig Veda*, and are inspired by the vision of the vast untrodden Indian earth, viewing the landscape of northern India as only one part of the whole cosmos or universe. And at their most eloquent, these poems are wider in outlook than the somewhat partial and clannish utterances of the time of the then known world. The tone of this early Vedic poetry, and of the later Upanishadic thinking, seems somewhat presumptuous, as it speaks for the whole world and not for any little corner of it, but it is universalist in feeling and sets the tone for much of the later writing of India.

In the subsequent Indian thought, this universalism became interconnected with the pantheistic Dravidian

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religious and philosophical ideas, which found favour among the folk. As the old Hindu thought rested on the doctrine of the One and the Many, according to which all the multifarious phenomena of the Universe are merely a reflection of the One supreme spirit, the universalist outlook was furthered in spite of the many sharp social divisions which arose in the caste-ridden society.

The primitive, communistic society had been based for centuries on the belief that each human body was a microcosm, symbolic of the bigger macrocosms. The world was interpreted in mundane thought as the outcome of the union of the male and the female. And kinship with the whole earth was sought through magical rites. The social adjustment with the incoming people was a continuous process and, in spite of many conflicts, it was always resolved in the way in which the problems of eating, drinking, housing, and clothing were solved. So that underneath the sophisticated codes, imposed during the Aryanisation of the previous Dravidian civilisation, the substratum of opinion remained rooted in the customs of give and take, prevalent among the people. Thus, there were roughly two kinds of feeling current in the long history of feudalism in India, the subjectivist idealistic thought of the upper orders, sophisticated, urbane, exclusivist, relegating all excellence to inheritance based on the right to unearned income from the land, for religious rites performed on behalf of the people, and the vast underlayers of the agro-craft community which had come to consider the birth of the whole universe on the parallel of the birth of human beings. The subsoil

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went on absorbing all the magical beliefs and used the traditional implements, in common with the new comers, while the upper strata fought out the battles of ideas and physical battles. Now and then there was a revolt on behalf of the lower strata against the hierarchies on the top, releasing the creative and critical spirit of the people. And thus the universalist spirit, involving tenderness and human connection, was furthered, as against the dominant idealistic thought which sought to impose itself on reality, guarding the purity of the God-inspired words against the humanistic revolts.

Such a revolt was offered towards the end of the Vedic period in the 6th century B.C. by Gautama the Buddha.

As has been explained already, the Buddha did not believe in a Supreme God. He took from the people their belief in *Samsara*, the universe, as a sentient, living reality. And, he questioned the various hypotheses of upper caste thought, resolving his many doubts, through reason and understanding. And instead of the speculative delusional omnipotent God of the Hindus, he evolved a series of rules of conduct, based on compassion towards other human beings, without the intricate subterfuges of Brahamanical thought. He accepted the people's speech, Prakrit, and preached, in this language, the ultimate doctrine of extinction in *Nirvana*, as the only way out of the pain of existence.

The doctrine of Mahavira Jina, who flourished about the same time, was also based on the ideas of tenderness for everyone and everything

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But somehow, even during the mental struggle and debates of these religions with each other and with Hinduism, the emphatically sectional, racialist and patriarchal doctrines of the Vedic period, tended to permeate Hindu thought. So that while Hinduism, based on the social order of caste, survived, because of its acceptance of all primitive beliefs, the more humanist Buddhism and Jainism became redundant through Hindu absorption of their truths. Thus the Universalist feelings of the Buddhists and the Jains reinforced Hindu pantheism and universalism.

Actually it was only through this universalist outlook in everyday thinking, that the Greek, Kushan, Hun, Scythian, Mongol, Arab, Pathan and Persian invaders had been absorbed. Of course, the closed caste order of the Hindus at the top met the closed order of beliefs of the newcomers, specially the Muslims, but there was a constant intermixture and fraternisation below. In fact, because the invaders were fewer in number, the converts from the conquered peoples brought their civilisation and culture into the new faith they accepted. And in spite of the sectarianism, rivalry and bitterness of the hierarchies, the mental and social habits remained rooted in the self-sufficient village below.

And even when the British conquest broke down the old forms completely with the devastating force of the comprehensive machine civilisation, the people took revenge by adopting such Western techniques as suited them and incorporated them into their old cultural patterns. Thus, while the chassis of the motor has always been European, the body of the bus is generally built out of Indian wood; and the charms

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and the magical ideas come from the countryside to be hung against the driver's seat; and the poems written at the back of the lorry are culled from Indian folklore. The Indians did not resist Western ideas, but the foremost of them went, over the heads of the British rulers, to Europe itself to learn the sciences and to acquire the relevant techniques of the European civilisation, rejecting the nationalism of the West into the the bargain, and taking the direction of a creative socialism. Thus it has become possible for the attitude of Universalism subtly to permeate our attitudes.

This value, therefore, still remains a dynamic characteristic, *unconsciously* operative, both among the masses and the intelligentsia. From it springs the doctrine of co-existence — the attitude of the human family as one. The seas do not divide the continents, but connect the various peoples who constitute mankind, and the sky is the heavenly dome which encompasses everyone in the cosmos.

INTOLERANT - TOLERANCE: The second value, Intolerant - tolerance, has suffered many vicissitudes. During the Aryanisation of the country, the barbaric nomads brought death and destruction to the Proto-Dravidian and Dravidian civilisation of the Indus Valley. And they were totally uncompromising in the imposition of their beliefs on the people, subduing them with a wanton disregard of their feelings. Only the superior numbers of the Dravidian peoples, and their advanced agricultural techniques and magical ideas, conquered the simpler invaders. The mixing of the strains was thus achieved through a relative

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intolerant-tolerance on both sides.

All the noble ideas at the top had to contend with the primitive communism of the Indian village, where no one owned land but had rights in land. After the first brush up, the newcomers had to settle down, in the self-enclosed village, as neighbours, if not as friends. There was plenty of fertile land for cultivation, for cattle grazing as well as for collecting fuel. Soon, an uneasy peace prevailed and led to the period of acceptance of new congeries of people among the millions of other congeries, which went to make the cosmos, called India.

The background of this social economic intolerant-tolerance came from the instinctive animistic, pantheistic primitive universalist attitude of people's thought. And Hindu religion, which had accepted so many impurities from the Dravidians already, accepted the other ways of approaching God in the intricate and confusing hugger-mugger of idolatory, now giving Kushan boots to the Sun god, then draping the mother Goddess, who had always been naked. And they personified each idea, ghost and spirit, in the vast pantheon of which one or the other gods was irresistible to men of the new religions. The highest sanctions were given to this anthropomorphism by the great god Krishna, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, when he said: 'I give to everyone according to his worship'. In the myths associated with this great god, he assumes 'the forms desired by his worshippers'. The implication of this was that there is a variety of ways of beliefs, though the goal is the same, and that each of the many ways may be equally right — for who knows?

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Of course, the social organisation of caste maintained the essential cohesion of Hinduism. As no one could be converted to the Hindu faith, but every one was born in it, the believers could afford to look on, secure against any real threat to their hegemony. And when the fanatical Huns and Jats boasted about being better Hindus, because they were defending the faith against newcomers, a convenient formula was found to sanctify their conversion — that they had arisen from the sacrificial fire. The Brahmin oligarchy had, indeed, evolved a subtle and intricate psychology of ritualistic worship, by which it could keep its hold on the individual as well as the mass. The priestcraft retained intimate contact with the festivals of the laity. In this way, the Brahmins succeeded in ousting the priests of other religions from contact with the people, because many monks of the other orders did not participate in the customary ceremonies.

From this it can be argued that the Hindus did not show any real tolerance to the peoples of the other faiths when some vital challenge came. And this charge could be justified, to a large extent, in regard to the treatment offered by Hindus to Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Only, in so far as Hinduism, unlike other revealed religions, renounced the finality of its revelations, while the others insist on it, it has remained a looser ideological discipline than the other dogmatic faiths, except for the rigidity of its caste structure.

This is not to suggest that the kind of charitable understanding of other peoples' points of views has percolated into the personal temperament of every

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Hindu. All the same, it is obvious that the pantheism of the lower strata encouraged a kind of intolerant-tolerance about alien modes. Perhaps, this intolerant-tolerance, in its turn, left a residue of serenity and gentleness in the Indian temperament, and besides this the frequent conquests resulted in weakness and cowardice. But the intolerant-tolerance is lapsing now under the stresses of the cash-nexus-machine civilisation of the West, though it may have remained as a conscious unconscious sub-stratum for a long time in the past.

Certainly, one must be on one's guard against the acceptance of this temperamental characteristic as a uniform trait of the Indian people in the face of the cash-nexus society, with the inherent challenge of conflict, not only against alien nations but all other faiths and orders in hard competition with each other. The many passages of bitter history of Hindu-Muslim rivalry, culminating in the communal riots of the partition, as well as the linguistic riots of the present day, show that, under the influence of new economic social pressures, even so-called gentle people addicted to intolerant-tolerance, and the doctrine of non-violence, can become possessed of sudden hatred and neurosis, like all other world communities where aggressive nationhood has made violence almost a virtue and where racialism is exalted as a valuable doctrine.

If one was asked, however, what is the distinctive attribute of the average Indian, in the present world, which is obsessed by the cold war, one would have to say, that, essentially, perhaps because of the lack of economic means which may make him an Imperialist

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and a war monger, he is relatively more docile and a little less amenable to the cold war, and may believe in the co-existence of individuals and nations more readily, because he knows that without peace he has no future as a human being.

COMPASSION: The third most important value, which really follows from the two mentioned above is the sense of compassion or understanding of the failings of individuals and allowing for the improvement, or growth in their personality, through devotion or enlightenment.

Again, this is a negative virtue, because the individual in his village community remained aloof from the changes of dynasties at the top. Against the tyranny of kings, and human invaders, there was probably no surplus of energy left to employ against others. The difficulties of the individuals were internal, that is to say, of continuous social adjustment and not those of organised power for defence or aggression. Self-idolatory, or nation-worship, began to appear as a phenomenon only under British rule, and even then it was the desire to get rid of domination rather than to achieve Imperialist domination over others. And when the upper oligarchies rigidified the boundary walls, the rebels from below took people away to the heart of nature, to teach them balance and poise. As the thunder and the black clouds of the tyrants passed, the problems of personal pain asserted themselves, specially as the economic process remained ever primitive, leaving the dead and the sick and the weak to rot, through the rapacious greeds of feudalism

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and the consequent neglect of public works.

The Buddha's insistence on *karuna*, compassion, was the direct result of the suffering he saw in life, the heinous exploitation of the individual by feudal authority and by the orthodox Brahmanical priestcraft, the 'chosen' super race, permanently installed on top.

Thus any respect for the individual, which arose, came through recognition of the cruelties of feudalism, its constant rapine, carnage and loot, as well as the oppression of the caste system. And the emphasis on tenderness was the direct result of the suffering of the lower orders. The philosophers felt not the direct insult of personal humiliation but the indirect humiliation of seeing other people humiliated.

ARE THESE VALUES OPERATIVE?: The question will be asked whether these three values of Indian civilisation and culture are really operative today, or can be actively practised in the context of India's entry into the modern world of capitalist enterprise which is still more dominant than socialist planning.

Apart from what has been indicated already, the answer to this question depends on the world situation itself. If the forces of war engulf the human race, then the human values professed by any individual or group will disappear in the crucible of complete or partial extinction. All that can be guaranteed is that, because of the peculiar confusion of India's history and through the many defaults of the Indian temperament, coming down through repressive and patriarchal feudal societies, the Indian social fabric has retained certain other negative virtues and residual ideas: it is clearly

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more universalist, tolerant and compassionate than the fanatical, closed minded, self-righteous cold war mongering nation-states of the West, which are bent upon committing suicide rather than give up their outmoded systems of profit making, organised selfishness, greed and racial prejudice. And, until this day, in the balance, it can be said that among the eighty per cent of the Indian people the sensitiveness to the values of the old culture has percolated, in spite of the increasing vulgarisation, almost as the essence of flowers of civilisation is invisibly distilled into the perfume of culture.

On the other hand, the impact of the West still continues to upset the balance, both through the mechanical adjuncts of selfish economic gratification and political power impulse brought about by monopolies but also through direct intervention by the powers, with cold war mentalities, bribing, corrupting and seeking to demolish all neutralism in order to take India into military alliances which have appeared as a kind of death sentence against all moral and human values.

The greatest danger to the safeguarding of the best things in our traditional culture has been the corruption indulged by those who give, for partisan interest, large scale bribes, to win over the younger intelligentsia to conformism, with middle class Western values. They seek security in this bought-up comradeship. They are frightened of those who consider culture to be not merely the acceptance of the past wholesale, but as a process recreated through criticism and even revolt. They regard all original thinking as communism.

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I am not certain whether the owning classes of India will not barter away our peaceful, humanist and socialist aspirations to urges for personal profits and power and leave the wreckage of millions of souls behind to contemplate the big-bellied prosperity of the few. But I do feel that conformism to middle class Western values is not really possible by any conscientious intellectual, who sees that all those human activities, which give meaning to our lives cannot be restricted to the few but must gradually include more and more awakened intelligences.

At the moment, every rustle of the movement of an aeroplane in the air over Europe, sends a thrill of terror, because it may be part of a twenty-four hour patrol, or a spy plane about to release a hydrogen bomb by mistake. These terrors, fears and hates, mock at our humanity and leave us gasping for breath in the vain attempt to believe whether our own traditional values, however indifferently held, but born of historic necessity, may not, after all, have some use for the modern world.

Only our own task is of persistent rediscovery. So that we can, in this age of knowledge, possess millions of peoples with information about the past, explain the significance of ideas and feelings, to enable men and women to inherit culture, self-consciously, rather than ritualistically.

In this way people will take what they need, to give meaning to their lives and not put too heavy a weight on their heads.

Also, in this way, they can link up the past with the present. And, as in a smithy, where the metal is

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melted before being hammered into shape, it may be necessary to break down the tradition, to pull it into pieces, to reconstruct it.

Not the mere repetition of *mantrams* but the invention of new values, is necessary through the revolt against the rust of untruth which sticks to truth in the process of transmission in paternalist societies.

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THE PROCESS OF SYNTHESIS

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Modern Movement

AFTER THE WORDS OF RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY asking for synthesis between the truths of the renaissance enlightenment of Europe, and its sciences, with the best values in ancient Indian Culture, had been spoken, they began to be forgotten.

The Brahmo Samaj, which he had helped to found, was abused by the orthodox Hindus and the whole current of advanced thinking turned back on itself. The question was often addressed by the revivalists to the modernists: Do you prefer Sita of the *Ramayana* or Helen of Troy of the *Iliad*?

On the one hand, there were the emancipated followers of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Iswarchander Vidyasagar, who initiated bold educational policies. They were few, but they succeeded in forming a society for the advancement of technical education; they evolved a technical Institute, and the Bengal National College. The illustrious names associated with this movement were Taraknath Palit, Rash Bihari Ghosh, Gurrudas Bannerji, Satish Chander Mukerji, Brajindranath Seal, P. V. Mukerji, Aurobindo Ghosh and Rabindranath Tagore.

In spite of the genuine belief in cultural emancipation of modern India, these intellectuals, except for rare examples like Tagore, mostly forgot about the contribu-

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tion to India, and world culture, of Islam.

On the other hand, the Hindu revivalists linked themselves with the new movement for freedom. The Shakti cult was revived by the novelist, Bankim Chander Chatterji. Swami Vivekananda, the follower of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, spoke in the name of a revived Vedantic idealism and challenged the West. Aurobindo Ghosh said: 'Nationalism is not a mere political programme; nationalism is a religion that has come from god; nationalism is a creed by which you shall have to live.' Bal Gangadhar Tilak, from Maharashtra, wrote about the Aryans with great pride, stressed the role of Shivaji, and the Western ghat followed by caricaturing the sahibs of the West through ridiculous images in their Ganpati festivals.

The synthesis, preferred by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, between Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Greek and Latin, was ignored as a principle by the superficial modernists and brushed aside by the revivalists. No one was in touch with the villages and the middle class intelligentsia was torn between two factions: one part anti-British and the other part collaborationist.

The Muslims began to feel that the tide of national consciousness was flowing towards the mother source of the Ganges and nowhere towards the Jumna, on which they had built their own two main capitals. Therefore, the larger section of the educated Muslims stood away from the Indian National Congress. In fact, Sir Syed Ahmed, who was the doyen of the Aligarh movement, and a believer in Anglo-Muslim synthesis, openly discouraged the Muslims of Northern India from joining the Congress. The other Muslim leaders

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were mainly revivalists in their own peculiar manner, as is obvious from the career of the Ahmediya-Wahabi Movements. The Muslims could only look back on the period of their supremacy in the past and the few among them, who took to education, were derived from the upper classes. It is true that against this inhibited, reactionary trend of Muslim opinion, there came the Ali brothers in Western India and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in Bengal. But these nationalist Muslims could not answer for the predominantly Hindu bias of their colleagues in the Indian National Movement, even as they resented British efforts to incite the Muslims against the Hindus.

Thus the age-old preoccupation of the upper orders of Indian society, with the doctrinal purity of their religions, resulted in the imposition of a narrow factionalism on both Hindus and Muslims alike. And the purity of religion became dogmatic adherence to the word. And the divinely inspired word easily led to its exploitation for political slogan mongering.

The liberals at the top of the Indian National Movement, who used to quote Mill and Burke against the English, were succeeded by a number of politicians who talked in terms of Mazzini and Garibaldi. But the conservatives began to reject science and reason and lent themselves to the orthodox faiths, asking for freedom but denying the spirit of man which was the core of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's teaching about the nature of progress.

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Rabindranath Tagore

It was left to Rabindranath Tagore, to resuscitate the thesis of Raja Ram Mohan Roy: to harmonise the vital ideas of our tradition with the inner forms of the West, to criticise, initiate and invent, in the new changed circumstances, rather than merely to follow the past blindly.

'We have to consider that the West is necessary to the East', he said. 'We are complementary to each other, because of our different outlooks on life, which have given us different aspects of truth. Therefore, if it be true, that the spirit of the West has come upon our fields in the guise of a storm, nevertheless it is scattering living seeds that are immortal. And when in India we become able to assimilate in our life what is permanent in Western civilisation, we shall be in the position to bring about a reconciliation of these two great worlds.'

As has been said before, he found the one-sided dominance by the British Nation galling. And he tried to unite the Hindus and Muslims and the Christians in a *religion of man*, the kind of humanism that was, unfortunately, derided both by the orthodox Hindus and the Muslim mullahs and the Christian padres.

And it is significant of his courage that, though he was born of an aristocratic family, in his later years he was proud to be called a 'leftist'. He was deeply moved by the poverty of the Indian people; and in his *Letter from Russia*, he perceived the nature of the solution for the Asian and African masses: 'I do not believe the punitive rod is inactive in the present

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Russian regime, but, at the same time, education expands with extraordinary vigour.' And though he was a poet, who had loved the humanities all his life, he took to writing on science for the children; to bridge the gulf between the ancient philosophies and the modern temperament.

He mocked at those who suggested that we had aeroplanes in ancient India. And he created the atmosphere in which the botanist J. C. Bose, the chemist, P. C. Ray, and the statistician, Prafulla Mahalanobis, could pursue their scientific researches with great distinction.

This humanitarianism of Rabindranath Tagore was a genuine fusion of the East and the West in his own person. Eleven times, during his life, he had gone on journeys to various parts of the world, and he had searched deeply into the conflicts of the modern world. And yet he believed that the East and the West needed each other: 'The *mantram* which gives our spiritual vision its right of entrance into the soul of all things is the *mantram* of India, the *mantram* of peace, of goodness, of unity, *Santam, Sivam, Advaitam.* The distracted mind of the West is knocking at the gate of India for this. And is it to be met there with a hoarse shout of exclusion?'

The most permanent contribution of Tagore in the work of synthesis was the founding of Viswa-Bharati, the International University, at Shanti-Niketan in Bolpur, Bengal, where he continued to practise some of the ideals which might help mutual understanding between the nations; where he initiated experiments in rural reconstruction, in the establishment of the

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principle of 'learning by doing', and in evolving a new curriculum of music and dance and the other arts as part of teaching.

The gulf between traditional values and modern knowledge remained unbridged, however, in spite of Tagore.

There was no real basis for the quiet, slow work necessary for creative living. For instance, the universities of India, which might have been the places where the honest scholars, pioneers and students may have imbibed the newest knowledge and tried to integrate it with the old truths of harmony with nature and life, had mostly become machines for producing graduates, where the teachers instructing big classes, suffered from brain fag and were really much more interested in the next grade of pay than in discoveries which may help progress. The occasional books, written by the distinguished scholars, suffered from orthodoxy. Prof. Radha Kamal Mukerji was content to announce that we had canals in ancient India. And his brother Prof. Radha Kumud Mukerji, declared that the Mauryan Empire, under Chandragupta and Ashoka, was the world's first secular welfare state. This Hindu chauvinism was matched by the Muslim poet, Iqbal, who wished to revert back to the dynamic outlook of the *Koran* and said that 'liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration', thus contradicting many of his own forward ideas.

The literary intelligentsia remained averse to the values of the inventive science under the influence of the English intelligentsia, which had steadily turned its back on the Industrial revolution, from which

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it had gained. Nor did this intelligentsia know very much about India's past. In time of stress, its members fell back on the Vedanta philosophy for support, culling their ideas from brilliant interpretations like those of Professor Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta, without going to the sources.

The campaigns and political struggles against British rule, launched by Mahatma Gandhi, made it difficult to have the time to pursue any genuine synthesis, except by Tagore who continued to adventure with a touch of rebelliousness, irreverence and even satire.

Jawaharlal Nehru

There was one man who seemed all this time to be preoccupied with the ideas of Ram Mohan Roy and Tagore, though he did not enjoy the advantages of as varied a learning as his two predecessors. This man was Jawaharlal Nehru, who had been working in close collaboration with Gandhi, and was regarded by many people as the natural heir to the Mahatma. Born of an aristocratic Kashmiri Brahmin family, he had been privileged to study in Harrow and Cambridge. Therefore he had read both law and sciences. And, on his return home, he had plunged into nationalist politics. He seems to have been aware of the intellectual mediocrity of many of his companions and spent his jail terms mostly in reading and writing. As he had been away from his daughter and had not looked after her schooling, he began a series of letters for her, during one of his longer spells in prison, concentrating upon certain aspects of man's story in this

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universe, which was later published as *Glimpses of World History*. This narrative was influenced, to some extent, by the concepts of Vico, Michelet and Marx, that the creation of the means of production determines man's actions and thoughts in the everyday life, and leads to the emergence of a superstructure of culture. During another period spent in jail, he attempted a rather eclectic, but, nevertheless, vital book, *Discovery of India*, which confirmed in him some of those tentative opinions, which he had formed through his mature readings on the basic questions of India's unity, the country's relation to Western thought and to the ancient tradition. Always behind the exposition of ideas, there was, in Jawaharlal, the compulsion of service to the Indian people, whose wretchedness he had sensed with an almost convalescent tenderness.

After he had returned from Europe in the thirties, he had written:

> 'For many months, I wandered about India and millions of faces passed before my eyes. I saw a thousand facets of this country of mine, in all their rich diversity, and yet always with the unifying impress of India upon them.
>
> I sought to understand what lay behind those millions of eyes that stared at me, what hopes and desires, what untold sorrows and miseries unexpressed. Glimpses came to me that illumined my vision and made me realise the immensity of the problems of the hundreds of millions of our people.'

Thus impelled, he had thrown himself into the

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struggle for freedom to the exclusion of all other considerations of family, profession, ease and even his beloved books, though he carried a modest library with him wherever he went. The lines of Whittier, written about a similar person, are certainly very apt in the description of Jawaharlal's plight at this time:

> Forgo thy dreams of lettered ease:
> Put thou the scholar's promise by
> The rights of men are more than these
> He heard and answered, 'Here am I!'
> He set his face against the blast,
> His feet against the flinty shard,
> Till the hard service drew at last
> Its own exceeding great reward.

As an active functionary of the Indian National Congress, having occupied the position of secretary of this institution, and sometimes as president, he gave a direction to the great liberation movement, away from national chauvinism of the last century, towards a wider international outlook. He learnt from Gandhi devotion to the peasantry, though, throughout, he could not understand the Mahatma's reliance on the 'inner voice', the old man's attitude towards the suppression of sex, cow worship, vegetarianism and egocentric strategy of struggle. Also, he proclaimed his own faith in socialism as the only way of alleviating the condition of the many peoples in India as against Gandhi's doctrine of trusteeship by the rich of the poor. He knew that the bulk of the nationalist opinion around

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him was reactionary, but he found supporters among the youthful men of the left, and he may be said to have given the direction for the positive advance of India towards economic freedom, more than any other Indian in our time, even if he has failed to produce the necessary dynamic to build a socialist society.

It is true, that he has been an eclectic, and has not had the time to work out any coherent system of thought, before or even after he became Prime Minister of India in the first National Government of 1947, after the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. But the tentativeness of his position gave him a certain flexibility, away from doctrinaire rigidity, which was very useful for him in balancing the many forces under his direction. For instance, he has insisted on the control of science through emphasis on moral values. And though a believer in central planning to recover from centuries of backwardness, he is anti-monopolist and believes in small self-governing communities working through local industries and multi-purpose co-operatives in agriculture and crafts, to develop individual taste and judgement even as he stands for the major industries. The fundamental urges of his temperament have remained radical, throughout; and he has been distinguished, above his colleagues, by the gift of penetration into the heart of a problem, though he has seldom understood the character of the men around him. Always, he has been able to probe the invisible mental background which determines events. He has been rightly described as 'the man of the age of tomorrow'. Perhaps, that is the reason why he has not been able always, successfully, to take

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everyone with him, forward into history. He stood head and shoulders above his companions, as a man of towering intellect, but vascillating in action, who could not communicate the import of his ideas to the people who worked with him. The working committee of the Congress accepted his outlook on democracy, but did not go very far towards accepting an Indian kind of socialism. And his praise of some aspects of Soviet planning left them cold. All the same, he maintained his hold on the country, because of his sacrifices and because of his addiction, to some extent, to the Gandhian principles of integrating ideas and acts, to become an example. In many ways, he represents in his own person, the kind of synthesis which Raja Ram Mohan Roy had desired for India, through the fusion of a comprehensive historical outlook with an emphasis on the humanities. And, perhaps, as he has himself acknowledged, he is a truer heir of Tagore than of Gandhi. It seems, to many of us, that he is the author of the concept of a contemporary civilisation in India in which some degree of controlled industrialisation would bring prosperity, without resort to Imperialism, authoritarianism and a blind belief in science, and without an overpowering cash-based capitalist civilisation, with its tentacles of multiplied wants, extravagant advertising, armaments and colonies. For no one has been more conscious of the achievements and failures of the West than he. And he seems to have projected his vision in a manner which embraces the hope, not only for the brown peoples of Asia, but also for the dark races of Africa, and very many more besides, of a future in which the integral values of human

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personality can be nourished without unnecessary violence and hatred but with a slow reversal from the destructiveness of Europe and America towards creativeness and good neighbourly relations.

The process of synthesis, which began almost a hundred years ago, but which proceeded, haltingly, has certainly not been completed. The two entirely different civilisations of India and the West cannot coalesce without the acknowledgement by Europe that aggressive armament drives must go, the colonies must be freed. And social justice between the nations has to be the norm, in giving back the gains of Imperialist exploitation to the so-called backward countries. And the enormous gap between the professions and practices of Western democracies has to be closed. Since, however, the British power, which unwittingly introduced the forces of social revolution, but failed to carry it out to its logical conclusions, is now out of the way, the process of renewal begun, during the last fifteen years of freedom, has certainly become more intense under Nehru's leadership.

The new changes are not likely to produce results very quickly, but they are fascinating even to those who are involved in the process, because of the many failures and the fewer gains.

Even to the complete cynics, it is already apparent that a new pattern is emerging, in which some part of the operative values of the past, described above, may be worked into organic relation with the empirical and deeper needs of today, if the intelligentsia can be awakened.

The evidence of this pattern is not yet obvious in

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the cultural patterns before us, because such changes are never mechanical and obvious. Also, it is true, that they are being applied half-heartedly, by an intelligentsia, which is not persuaded about the need of socialism.

But, importantly, this new Indian orientation seems to be rooted in a broad humanist philosophical attitude which, though not clearly stated, forms the inner basis of the "socialist pattern of society", that is accepted, by and large, as the goal of India's progress. And its essence lies in the democracy which has been deliberately preferred as the instrument of change.

Perhaps the parliamentary democracy, which was adopted after the departure of British power, is not quite suitable to Indian conditions, unless it is adapted to the social conditions obtaining in this country.

The British tradition of democracy has grown through at least two hundred years of conscious struggle to achieve adequate representation of people and redress. Therefore, it has attained legitimacy, some efficacy, good constitutional rules and conventions, respect for individual liberties, a not too unfair competition among parties (though the influential conservative press weights the scales against labour, with its half lies and quarter lies), a number of talented men among the many mediocrities of the politically active class, the neutrality of the army, also the concept of planned economic development.

These conditions were not present in India at the time of the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. So that while the framework of Parliamentary Democracy is here, the education of the electorate

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about their needs and interests has not proceeded apace. The bulk of the members of Parliament represent the new owning classes and townspeoples, while the peasantry has little or no voice.

Only recently has the Government taken initiatives in regard to village participation in the secular democratic process, and a broader distribution of power through decentralisation into Panchayat Raj, or basic democracy.

The ruling intelligentsia in the steel frame of the bureaucracy is almost totally unaware of the lack of a dynamic belief in democracy in the countryside, and it is content with the outer facade it has put up. The Government has little appreciation of the fact that, in Great Britain, the economic revolution preceded the political evolution; whereas, in India, political power has been achieved before the socio-economic transformation. The majority of the members of the mammoth ruling party are elected on tickets given to them, not on merit, or on the basis of their constructive work, but from considerations of how much money power, influence and manouvering ability they can command. And the rule, which allows political parties to be financed by capitalist enterprises, further corrodes the basis of fair elections. Any cohesion that may be in the ruling party is achieved through the slogan of fighting communism. And legitimacy is prized above everything else. The danger of one of the factions taking over, with the help of the army, as in several other free countries of Asia, is ignored, because some groups are themselves pro-monopoly capitalist and point to the example of advanced,

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democratic countries, which have had to give up democratic forms, as parallels for securing strong rule. Some of their publicists believe that it is necessary to restrict the franchise and to create a responsible and incorruptible *Samurai*.

If parliamentary democracy has survived so far, it is mainly because of Mr. Nehru's deep belief in it, and because of his efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, in spite of the many obstacles in his way. He would rather encourage greater attachment to democratic practice than limit political responsibility at the Centre.

This has led to the personalisation of leadership. So that, in spite of his own willing submission to democracy, Mr. Nehru has begun to seem an indespensable cornerstone of Parliament.

The reliance upon Nehru's leadership, in fact the concentration upon his personality, has the effect of making him weak, when he should be strong, and strong when he should be flexible. As a genuine liberal, he is not susceptible to exaggerated self-importance, beyond the limits of ordinary human vanity. And yet he condones undemocratic trends within his own party. One of his biographers has accused him of a 'lack of ruthlessness'. Certainly, no one in the country would have objected if he had been more forceful in the interest of promoting democratic practice, of carrying out the 'socialist pattern' of the Five Year Plans, of co-operation on the land, and of weeding out corruption from public life. There was no danger of his own abuse of his great moral and political authority. But, often, he has stood by as a

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silent, gentlemanly witness of the subversion of democratic ideals, allowed pressure groups to work havoc in his own party, permitted the casteism, linguism and provinciality of his own congressmen and then mildly reproved the offenders or deplored the sad state of affairs.

There is no doubt, therefore, that while Mr. Nehru's sensitive conscience is the source of Indian Democracy, he has already allowed its structure to be weakened by permitting scandalous intrigues against his principles in his own party, paving the way for tremendous inequalities, the lack of implementation of the plans and growing national disintegration.

The initial gains of democracy were so obvious that it would be tragic if it was allowed to be overthrown after Nehru, for lack of imagination, strength and reasoned patriotism, by a handful of pro-monopoly politicians or religious fanatics. The survival of Indian Democracy is all the more necessary, because of its subversion by the Military Juntas in several countries of Asia. And there will be little hope for democracy in the new countries of Africa if the example of India is not there.

Only the emergence of a strong group of Nehruite democrats, more determined than Mr. Nehru himself, can save democracy in India and all that at present goes with it.

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THE FORCES FOR AND AGAINST SYNTHESIS

The Crucible

WHAT ARE THE FORCES FOR AND AGAINST synthesis? In other words: What are the constituents of the New Contemporary Indian Civilisation? And how can the values of the past remain operative, in view of the fact that the economic structures out of which they rose are now dead and gone, while new social forms of the West have become accessible to the Indian people?

At the centre of the 'Socialist Pattern of Society', and the democracy through which it is to be achieved, stand the various Five Year Plans. And at the core of these plans stands the undefined but vaguely understood concept of man, as a growing integral human being, as against the cog in the machine, or the conveyor belt automaton.

As has been pointed out, throughout the last hundred years, some of the pioneer thinkers tried to emphasise the religion of man as against Hinduism and Islam, and proposed a basic primary philosophy for the new struggle. Both Tagore and Gandhi defined this humanism in their own way. But both gave it mystical sanctions, even as they instinctively grasped that these sanctions may not be available to the bulk of the Indian people.

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Apart from Tagore, who defined humanism as a coherent philosophy, Gandhi, who had only a few ideas, (but knew how to act on them) linked up his worship of man, even of the lowliest untouchables, with a devotionalism akin to that of the mediaeval saints. For him, the people were *Daridra Narayan*, the poor gods. He encouraged non-violence and truth among them. Only, he went against his own deeper prognostications and told the poor that the rich were trustees of all wealth, which would be given away to the people when the *Ram Raj*, or perfect government, became possible.

The successor of these two leaders, thinker and man of action, Nehru, also wishes to relate his 'Socialist Pattern' to 'Spiritual Feelings'. Perhaps, he wishes to interpret Socialism, apart from its scientific meaning, as a moral doctrine against squalor of all kinds. Of course, aside from vague references to 'Spiritual Feelings', he has not given any religious sanctions to his love of man. Aware of the dangers in the use of atomic power, for total destruction, and with lingering doubts about science and technology as the enemies of creativeness, he has invoked spirituality as a corrective against 'technology-run-mad'. Perhaps by 'Spiritual Feelings' he means all those supporting ideal, cultural, social and political values, which go to make living cells and communities as against the football sweeps, the Hollywood films and crime stories which are necessary to substitute for the affections of the conveyor belt man.

But when he talks of the socialist pattern, his followers interpret him to mean socialism and he does not say

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'no'. The trend of thinking represented by Nehru, therefore, has actually found its reflection in almost all the manifold activities of the Indian people during the reconstruction programme of the last two Five Year Plans.

It is not quite certain to what degree the people of India are conscious of the shifting of emphasis from their old religions and faiths to 'Destination Man'. They are searching their hearts and minds and mix up the slogans of the new age with the shibboleths of the old ages. The fact that the education of the intelligentsia, as a whole, and of the bureaucratic intelligentsia, has been towards an acquisitive society, makes for the negation of the very concepts which are at the root of the plans. Besides, the lower middle class, and the middle sections which were the backbone of the Indian National Movement, have, after decades of low standards of living, only recently come to power, and wish to enjoy the gains of victory, which their collaboration with Gandhi and Nehru has made possible. So that, in their new role as Ministers in the Central and the State Governments, they half-heartedly help to run the Five Year Plans, while the scions of this very lower middle class become middle class, prefer the American way of life, with its cadillacs and chev's, large flats in the four big cities, full of luxury goods brought from the black money or through fabulous emoluments in the private sector of the mixed economy. Corruption is rampant on an unprecedented scale, with evasion of taxes by the men of the tiger economy, and the rich are getting richer, while the poor reach lower depths of degradation. And yet

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traditional values are invoked by the older generations.

Certainly, however, we are all involved from the top downwards in the process of a planned society, which may work out its various formulations through free discussion, in an elected Parliament, and provincial legislatures, in municipal institutions, village panchayats and the co-operative societies, when the pressures of inflation and lack of production, of comparatively low wages and high prices, leads to the tightening of belts all around, and to the recognition that the destiny of the Indian people is in their own hands and the road to life is through socialism and to death through unbridled capitalism, traditionalism and hypocrisy.

One cannot tell at this stage, which way the wind will blow: whether the lower middle class revolution will complete itself in the formation of an important middle class which will turn conservative and run counter to Socialism, or whether the skeleton of the planned economy will acquire flesh and blood and proceed towards a non-acquisitive, egalitarian society composed of congeries of small, fairly well-knit villages, growing from within, by the use of science, without succumbing to the power of the machine. The only safeguard against the greed of the few in India is that the rich themselves are a very poor rich, in terms of the other capitalists of the world, who are not likely to allow their 'native' brethren to become as powerful as themselves. And the 'natives' cannot achieve any capital accumulation, under the present taxation laws, from which they might be able to monopolise the economy of this country or the neighbouring

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countries. Also, they need the co-operation of the state and of the new lower middle class, and the workers and peasants, if production is to be achieved in a technically backward country. And by no stretch of imagination can Capitalism in India solve the problems of feeding, housing and clothing of an ever increasing population. Only under genuine Socialism, can a modicum of basic necessities be ensured.

Outwardly, therefore it would seem that the rich have become richer and the poor poorer. But, as Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, a brilliant Keynesian economist, has pointed out: in the confused world of India, there is no economic law which cannot be upset by those peculiar hangovers of bad mental and social habits of the past, such as hoarding, feudalism, corruption and the flourishing black market.

As, however, in India the political transformation preceded the social and economic revolution, (contrary to what happened in Great Britain, where the economic revolution went parallel with, or forced political changes), there is the hope that the inner compulsions of Indian society cannot dethrone the poor from the centre of the picture they now occupy in the plans.

And, from this point of view, there is not much difference between many of the Western peoples, particularly in the Socialist countries, who are dedicated to the concept of the welfare state, and the Indians who are trying to complete the unfinished social revolution and make India the youngest socialist democracy of the world.

On the surface, it is clear that the socialist pattern, of the kind evolved by Nehru, implies socialist humanism

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as the main faith of all the Indian peoples. But, underneath the exterior of contemporary India, there are many pulls from all kind of feelings and ideas, which may either be assimilated into this peculiar synthesis or may make India fall into pieces. I feel that some members of the Indian intelligentsia have left room in their speculations for strands of thought which seek to fit the Western kind of welfare state into the ancient pattern of culture, based on the deeply introvert concept of God-realisation. Some of these people lean back on the fourfold scheme of life, which was defined for the feudal periods, in the eternal system of idealist thought, enclosed in the books called the *Dharmashastras*.

This scheme, it may be recalled from a previous reference, defined life as falling into four parts:

(1) *Dharma* the discharge of duties and obligations and the practice of virtue;

(2) *Artha* the acquisition of wealth;

(3) *Kama* the enjoyment of the pleasures of life;

(4) *Moksha* freedom from the sense of want or desire, or attainment of liberation.

Apart from those Indian philosophers, among the ruling intelligentsia, who genuinely seek to use the traditional nomenclature, because they believe in the mystical sanctions behind them, there are a few intellectuals who use the old words because they feel that these are more easily understood by the illiterate peoples of India. These latter look for the nearest equivalent for the words of international socialist

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thought in the Sanskrit language and in the Hindu philosophical systems. This leads to confusion, unless the old words are interpreted in a new way, as Gandhi and Nehru have tried to do. But as the symbols and terms of Hindu idealist thought were evolved for different times, they do not seem to fit into the terminology of the new humanism, which seems to me, to be based on the collective effort to improve the life of man. Perhaps these intellectuals are dead set against uniformity, which the new technological, urbanised, bureaucratised social order everywhere portends. Therefore, they want to keep room for the 'spiritual restlessness' which may allow eccentricities. Also, they still hanker after the clever use of phrases, which may enable them to compete with those Western philosophers who invent a difficult terminology, as an escape from the need for action. And it is not clear whether they are attempting a synthesis of values or merely reconciling themselves to obscurantism.

There is no doubt that the terminology of *Dharma*, as implying duties and virtues, is familiar to the Indian masses. And it was useful in defining man's attitude towards the various political states which arose in India. The self-sufficient village recognised the worth of the individual, because of the insistence, in the Hindu faith, on the salvation of each person, through his own deeds. The individual thus owed certain duties to state and society, but he also had certain rights and claims on the state.

During the British occupation, however, the doctrine of the inalienable belief in the worth of the individual, for the purpose of salvation, came up against the

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Graeco-Roman concept of society, in which the individual can have his being and fulfilment mainly through the state. The old agrarian village culture of India had set definite limits to the authority of the state. And *Dharma*, representing the responsibilities and rights of the individuals, was above the state, safeguarding the individuals against the encroachments of the king. But the dominant European social doctrine, from the time of Aristotle to the modern aggressive state, has considered the state as the primary concept, and the individual as only part of it; having his being and finding his fulfilment through the state. In fact, it may be argued that both the capitalist and socialist states of Europe have been similar in this main tendency. The state considers itself as an organism made up of cells. The faith of the individual is of small consequence, so long as the central organism is thriving. And, in spite of certain checks and balances in favour of freedom of the individual, the civil liberties of the citizens, have constantly to be defended against the society which negates the values of the individual and his aspiration to govern himself without government. Hence the long struggle of European socialists and anarchists to attain the fullest powers for the individuals, and hence Lenin's promise about the inevitable 'withering away of the state'.

Since the British withdrawal, the Indian state, inheriting the tradition of an Europeanised bureaucracy, found itself the custodian of the European idea of the state. And this form of government, in our country, now confronts the old Indian ideal of the perfectibility of each individual soul, through self-realisation of the

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ultimately spiritual goal. The concept of the *Karma*, or good deeds of each individual, not only in this life but in the past life, helping his self-realisation is integral to his *Dharma*. And, the individual's development through *Karma* implies that if, in the caste order, he happens to be a Brahmin, then he already has vested interest in good deeds and may realise himself earlier than an outcaste, or even other members of the lower caste orders. In fact the idea of *Dharma*, was imposed by the Brahmanical orthodoxy on the basis of *Varna Ashram*, colour discrimination and later, on the basis of the caste system.

Jawaharlal Nehru has sometimes vaguely talked in terms of *Dharma*, interpreting it as a doctrine of rights and responsibilities. But, his opponent, Rajagopalachari, and many other more orthodox Hindus, are *Dharmabugs*, who wish to revive the old doctrine entire. And yet we have adopted a parliamentary democracy of the Western European kind. And our central government is concentrating on an all embracing plan which brings into its overriding sphere each and every soul, so that he can have his being and fulfilment through the state.

How then is the concept of each individual, as the custodian of his own personal salvation, to be reconciled to a Socialist Indian state. The anarchic individualism of the old Hindu doctrine does not fully share the ideals of anarchism in the European sense either; because the Indian belief in *Karma* leads to a denial of the organised life which is the modern state.

The protagonists of Hindu individualism concede that the rights of the individual have been traditionally

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limited, even in the past by certain social considerations. They refer to the Hindu concept of *Lokasangraha*, contending that the doctrine of the purposive activity of man, in the interest of the world, can become the Supreme *Dharma* of the individual; modifying the anarchist character of the search of the individual for self-realisation. And they feel, that this can provide the basis for a new kind of state, which blends the good of the main organism, with its constituent parts, that is to say, the individuals. The freedom of the individual is thus supposed not to be against the common good, because the doctrine of *Lokasangraha* connects the individual activity with the purpose of organised society.

I am not sure which of the two ideals, the European, or the qualified Indian concept of the individual, in a vague connection with the state, will gain ascendancy in the years to come. But it is quite clear that, at almost each stage of development, the conflict between the two ideals will become more and more apparent.

Certainly, the direction of the world struggle between the forces of war and peace, will have a good deal of influence on the concept of the state in relation to the individuals who compose it. Ultimately no religious or ethical touchstones seem to provide solutions for the struggle between the two power blocs.

But, if there is no war, from deep within the orbit of the Indian tradition of individualism, shorn of its religious sanctions, may grow the gradual limitation of the power of the state. Except that the old individualism will also have to shed its egoism and concern for personal salvation and take on the *bhakti yoga*,

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or devotion through works, which integrates the individual into the community. This strain of India's development was effectively worked into some kind of a modern tradition by Mahatma Gandhi and could have been emphasised by Nehru if he had taken to the road, like Vinobha Bhave. Because the small co-operatives, the Panchayats, and local industries, all depend on the creation of a psychology of mutual aid and work as worship.

Perhaps this demands a new definition of the essential nature of work under Socialism, which was at the core of the old individualism but which decayed with caste stereotypes, and which needs to be reorientated. There are seven functions of work in human psychology: (1) one can earn one's bread and the necessities; (2) one develops skill through the perception and understanding of the technique of a job and derives a sense of achievement; (3) one discovers the laws of nature and society through the performance of any single work; (4) one adds to the total of the fruits of work to the community; (5) one enjoys the right to a share of the fruits of labour; (6) one becomes an integrated part of the community; (7) one seeks through fellowship, the way to fulfilment, completeness and wholeness.

The dedication to work then starts from the individual and becomes the life of the community and higher and higher groups, but the contact of the hand, the head and the heart, with human personality is sustained, both in the process and the realisation.

This process is reversed when the Capitalist asks: All possible brain work should be removed from the

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shop, leaving only the foreman and gang boss's work which is strictly executive in its nature. Each man must grow accustomed to receiving and obeying instructions, covering details, large and small, which in the past have been left to his own judgement.' Music is on tap. And you can have chewing gum and money for cinema.

The acquisitive system necessitates the creation of many needs above human needs, through advertising. And it is bound up with the alienation of men from all creative ideals through emphasis on the assembly line. Selection for work on basis of education and temperament as well as work satisfaction is ignored in fulfilling targets of productivity.

We in India who have to produce more wealth because of our desperate poverty and misery, have to bear in mind the fact, which was ignored in 'the cities of productivity' of the West, that, at the same time as we build up, we must give some thought to creativeness and the organisation of free, mutually helpful communities.

The two trends have to be faced. And a decision taken to condition men, lost to the repetitive processes, to the life of creativeness outside their jobs. The bulk of the people need not be herded into large towns. And the emotional starvation can be replaced by the values of a more abundant, fuller and more conscious life.

This can only come from a genuine belief in the worth of the human personality, away from the insidious corrosions of the caste hierarchy of the Neo-Brahmins of one kind or another, who still retain the belief in

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their chosen race superiority. The concept of human personality has to be based on a clear and unambiguous humanism, which may give meaning to the life of millions of people in the obscure villages. This philosophy can avoid the compromise of the Western intelligentsia with the capitalist mass-media of propaganda, the sadism and violence of television programmes, and of artificial sexual excitement through films, as well as delinquency through crime and horror books and comics. Again, we have to avoid, if possible, the meaninglessness that has come from the vulgarisation of culture in the West, through the cynicism bred by a routine civilisation, making armaments through fear and hatred and keeping up its morale by the lowest excitements of the tribalist passions of the cold war. The lack of the high standards of the creative life, in the education of the individual, the absence of emphasis on moral and human values, as much as hidebound customs and conventions, can make life meaningless for human beings. And when such emptiness, frustration and no-care sets in, it is easy to trust a leader to do everything for a whole country. And a modern military dictatorship is even worse than the rule, even occasional, of the benign feudal oligarchy.

The peril, which faces the human personality in India, or, indeed, in many parts of Asia, can only be met by the inheritance of the vast stores of knowledge, through an expanding education, which may create integrated individuals, with a capacity for insight.

Above all, the intelligentsia must explain the meaning of 'Destination Man' to the people.

Unfortunately, however, so far there has been little

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or no attempt in India to study the decay of culture in the capitalist countries of the West. There has been no attention paid to the replacement of the sense of inner reality in literature and art by luxurious decorativeness. And the violent fight of the important thinkers of Europe and America, like Einstein, Russell, Dewey, Whitehead, Sartre, has not been understood among us. We tend to follow the politicians rather than the 'mad Professors'. And our middle class craves for the vulgarities of the 'affluent society' with an appetite which is nauseating.

The undefined scientific humanism of Nehru is at the moment accepted mainly because of the weight of state power which he represents, and because of the alliance of the state with the urges of the people. In spite of many hangovers from the past, and the traditional belief in *Karma*, the Indian people are, however, impelled to demand certain primary necessities, such as food, clothing, education, health and work. That is why Nehru recommends Socialism as their objective. But what does this mean? Apart from the welfare state, it also means, broadly speaking, a certain reorganisation of the social, economic and cultural structure to suit India's genius, its mainly agro-industrial life pattern. Nehru does not insist on a rigid pattern, because he does not wish for open conflicts to break out on the question of direction, etc. And he hopes that the basic economic urges will help to create a unitary man, in the midst of nature, leaving religion to the private conscience, in the Tolstoyan sense, and joining in a co-operative commonwealth of work for the growing individual in the small and big communities. This

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vagueness is frustrating, and it is already forcing a battle of ideas, through which socialism must win.

The Indian state thus seeks, progressively, but too slowly to bring about a greater equality and removal of the discrepancies and big gaps that exist today in the social structure, between those who may be said to be more prosperous than others and the rest. The contradictions evoked by the use of the term 'Socialist Pattern' rather than of Socialism are already too obvious and there is too little explanation of the creative life of society. All the same, the vague term 'Socialist Pattern' has certainly provoked searching questions and made the anti-intellectualism of the national leadership somewhat suspect, because, apart from *Dharma*, the people demand the fulfilment of their real human needs and interests, almost as though they were instinctively possessed by the concept of creative Socialism.

Thus if it was the intention of Nehru, in talking of 'Socialist Pattern', to develop the mental attitude of the people into a co-operative attitude rather than an acquisitive attitude, then it is possible that the compromise slogan has succeeded to a very small extent. It has come to be recognised, by and large, that, under the present conditions of India, it is not possible to allow an individual or a group 'to mount on the shoulders of another group' to better itself.

In some countries which have gone through a long process of industrialisation, perhaps the very rich could co-exist with the not so rich. But in a country, which is heavily populated, where one cannot stretch one's arms without hurting someone else, brotherhood

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and co-operation and the sense of the community become necessary. And the powerful have to be persuaded to restrain themselves.

This is the kind of feeling Nehru has put forward: 'The urges and the genius of the people of India, and the background and conditions in which they live, make the 'Socialist Pattern of Society' desirable, because no other pattern is likely to lead us to the results we aim at within a measurable period of time. 'The devil is after us', he says 'and we have to progress rapidly. It is not a question of some people, or a few individuals progressing, but of 360 million people progressing and our taking them along with us.' And he has linked this approach with the outside world. 'We cannot ignore international happenings and events', he has insisted, 'because the technically advanced world is changing very fast and can envelop the poorer countries'. The best contribution which India can make, he feels, is to look after itself properly and then to offer such advice as may be useful, in the adjustments of psychological and political disputes between the nations.

All that he has said, during the last fifteen years or so, has, however, not broken down the inner resistance of the obscurantists. This is seldom defined in coherent terms. The Indian intelligentsia has not, except for a few forward minds, applied scientific method to the facts, urges, motifs, laws and values of the past and the present, in order to see what exactly we can reject from the old periods and how we can fit our intangible urges and values into the 'Socialist Pattern'. The scientists remain uninvolved in their laboratories;

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the pure economists remain addicted to free enterprise against planning; the creative writers consider the asking of fundamental questions to be merely propaganda and indulge in pure art and literature or descend to commercialism. In the confusion, which thus arises, the values of the old *Dharma* are not divorced from their caste implications, but promoted by revivalist leaders, who want a theocratic Hindu state, or by politicians who function in terms of slogans for opportunist party purposes and forget the needs of the people in their wish to build up a *Samurai* of the upper middle class princes and merchant princes and landlords.

Synthesis between Dharma as Rights and Duties and Primary Social Needs in the New Laws

The apperception of the conflict between the various aspects of the *Dharma* ideal with contemporary human values, has led the Indian Parliament to enact a certain number of laws, to initiate the synthesis between India and the modern Western humanism. The most important of these laws deals with the abolition of untouchability and caste discrimination. The refusal to allow the lowest castes to enter a temple has been made a punishable offence and all opportunities for education and service, and eligibility for the various professions has been thrown open to the outcastes.

The second significant reform deals with the position of women in the Hindu society. Under the new laws, polygamy has been abolished; women are allowed to ask for divorce and alimony and they can enter all

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the professions, on a basis of equality with the men, on equal wages for equal work. The right to inheritance, and adoption, for women, are now on a par with men.

A third category of reforms may be grouped under those measures which have led to the emphasis on the secular democratic nature of Indian society, thus reducing religion to the private conscience. The attitude behind these laws was what we have referred to in estimating the traditional values of India, the universalist approach of Indian culture, through which this country has accepted certain truths from the inside and absorbed what is of value in other cultures.

The groundwork for the absorption of many of the ideas of the West had, as I have suggested, been laid by the transformation of a primitive, self-sufficient economy, to the *laissez faire* capitalist economy of Europe and Socialism during the last two hundred years. And many of the advanced thinkers of India had written about the pernicious effects of caste, of child marriage, about the prejudice against widow marriage, and about the mixing of religious considerations in the affairs of secular democracy.

The political freedom of India, therefore, has not led to the revival of all the out-moded laws of the past — or to the resuscitation of antiquated social organisms, even though the old prejudices die hard and the good new laws are often negated in actual practice through the survival of superstitions.

Thus there has been some attempt to look for the social means to redeem part of the human suffering, which is the result of man-made laws, though the lack

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of much creative literature in the languages of India, with even the minimum social content, leaves the actual conflicts on a legalistic plane, without the real disruptionists coming into sensitive awareness of the people.

The new constitution, inaugurated on January 26th 1950, not only proclaimed India as a Sovereign Democratic Republic, but it also gave the solemn assurance to secure for all its subjects, liberty of worship, equality of status, and of opportunity, and to promote among them all, fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the people.

These guarantees along with the fundamental rights, have made the new Indian man, legally, the freest individual, within one of the most liberal societies of the world, except for our preservation of the preventive detention art of the British period, our continuation of hanging as a method of punishment, and our rigid laws on prohibition of drink and frank discussion of sex, while allowing illicit liquor and commercial pornography to prevail.

The economic reforms have helped, the laws to some extent, to transform those feudal structures in which the ugly social customs had their roots, but, as has been mentioned above, the revolt against the old customs does not figure in contemporary literature, which is modelled mostly on the elegant books of London, Paris and New York.

For instance, the untouchables, who were mostly landless, have been benefited from the laws which had abolished landlordism. And the cultivation of the land, through the various irrigation projects, will afford sustenance to millions of people who had no

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hope until a few years ago. But, in actual fact, the untouchables have a grim fight for every gain in the villages.

The planned industrial economy also seeks to go to the grassroots of Indian society, and may release a tremendous amount of human energy, hitherto never thought of as human at all, in the effort to develop the rich material resources of the country; but its implementation is in the hands of a bureaucracy, which is conditioned to routine files, except where some ardent young entrepreneur has drifted into the public sector.

It is likely that industrialisation will lead to the reorganisation of the social fabric, inherited from the past, languages and outlooks in India itself in the next generation. So only the direction of the future advance seems to have been set in the midst of paternalist, conservative society, without much creative education to evolve a new kind of man.

Certainly, there seemed to be from the start of the independence era, a grave lack of tolerance, or even tolerant-intolerance, in our country. The fratricidal killings among Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs in the riots of the partition were so horrible, that it would be the rankest hypocrisy to claim that tolerant-intolerance has remained an operative value. Since then the linguistic riots have only accentuated the bitterness between the various parts of the population, until Mr. Nehru, the author of the *Panch Sheel*, has been constrained to ask: 'Where is the tolerance? There is much brave talk about it, but there is little enough of it in reality.' The superficial covering of national

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unity is bursting open. And narrow fanaticisms have come out of our ' mental cupboard '.

The roots of the evil go deep: in bad education, lack of emotional and intellectual integration, which is made difficult, in a cash-nexus society, by the loss of will to dispense social and economic justice to the various regions of India by the followers of Mr. Nehru.

Synthesis of Traditional Values and External Relations

All the same, as an aspiration towards settling disputes by discussion, or argument, rather than with blows, and as a method of dissolving the cold war everywhere, the ideal of the ancient Emperor, Ashoka, informed the *Panch Sheel* ' to argue for the purpose of reaching, not victory, but truth '.

Since the *Panch Sheel* doctrine was put out, the heads of several states of the world, including Great Britain and Russia, have signed it. And, it was elaborated into the ten principles at the conference of Asian and African nations at Bandung.

During the last ten years, it would seem that though the high principles embodied in the *Panch Sheel* have not been attained, even internationally, except in brave declarations of some of the great powers, the influence of the doctrine among the ordinary people of the world, hungering for peace in the face of the threat of atomic war, has been fairly widespread. The world-wide urge for the meeting of the heads of states has continued to express itself in all countries of the world. And Mr. Nehru may have derived some satisfaction from the fact that wherever there

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is no prejudice against India's dynamic neutrality, and non-alignment with military blocs, there is a genuine appreciation of the validity of his positive approach of co-existence among the thinking people.

There is no doubt that this doctrine is based not only on the few more or less operative traditional values, but also arises from India's internal desire to have lasting peace in order to build up its technically backward economy. All foreign policies are ultimately built on the compulsions of a country's inner political and social life. And the *Panch Sheel* is no exception to the rule. Since India cannot become an imperialist power, even if she wishes to be one, but can only hope to build up its human beings, if there are a hundred years of peace, this doctrine may remain integral to the building of the new India.

As the world, however, is tired of the stresses of the cold war, it seems to accept, in some places willingly and in other places unwillingly, the idea of co-existence between different political systems, on the basis of free social and economic competition.

Mr. Nehru, more than other people, has been sensitive to the extraordinary changes which science has brought about in the modern world. He is aware of the challenge of the Hydrogen bomb and knows that only twenty or so of these out of the stock of 75,000 in U.S.A. and 50,000 in the U.S.S.R., are enough to wipe out one half of the world and bring slow radiation death to the other half. In the age of space travel, he knows of the danger of the missile and carrier weapons and of the surprise attack. He also knows that these advances of techniques are only the harbingers of

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more vital changes to come, making nonsense of any deterrent. And it is clear that even a war with conventional armies would be devastating for the underdeveloped countries of the world.

Also, he knows that the present time is symbolic of the tremendous internal revolutions taking place as a result of the moral and technological changes which are affecting human life, creating new thinking and varying social structures. Every thing is changing, and changing with a rapidity which makes it possible for us to believe that five per cent of the money from world disarmament may enable science to build up the peoples of the whole of Asia and Africa in less than twenty years to human status.

This part of Mr. Nehru's argument has not yet been understood by people in the advanced countries of the West, seriously enough. The changes described by Nehru can perhaps be seen only from the world of the have-nots and not from the world of the haves, because, in the advanced countries, the intelligentsia is in complete despair about the future, whereas in Asia and Africa faith in man and his future is inevitable to the faith in life itself.

Actually, underneath the cynicism of the Western intelligentsia, the fact is acknowledged that the moral as well as the technological and scientific advance of a country is the real test of its maturity. Those who are already possessed of techniques, but immersed in the day to day problems of routine, in Europe and America, function in narrow grooves of thought, and do not realise that the peoples of Asia and Africa are thinking ahead, because they appreciate how the

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advance of man's control over science and technology has taken Europe, Russia and America to unprecedented richness, and how these countries influence international affairs and govern every sphere of activity.

Mr. Nehru holds that no ideology or approach can ever be final from a scientific point of view, because of new developments. Even in the realm of Communism, he says, the firm and fixed ideology is being reinterpreted.

The logic of this argument is simple enough. 'If any person, or group, thinks that war is inevitable, it obviously follows that all talk of disarmament is nonsense. In that negative sense, co-existence, or peaceful co-existence, has no meaning, because you are inevitably going towards war and preparing for it. As against this a very large number of countries, almost all, one might say, have been progressively rejecting the idea that war is inevitable, in spite of the fact that the danger of war exists.'

According to this emergent belief that war is not inevitable, which has so far withstood the propaganda and provocations of the cold war, it has also come, increasingly, to be believed that there need not be inevitable armed conflict between different types of society and systems, except open competition of various forms of social polity.

Almost all the enlightened publicists and scientists of the world agree that, with the weapons in the possession of two blocs, war is not inevitable, unless it may result from an accident or from an act of madness on the part of some fanatic. Thus war is a thing which can come by accident — which accident must be

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prevented. So those who think that war is inevitable shut their minds and do nothing to prevent it. This attitude is incompatible with peaceful co-existence. In fact, it is incompatible with the idea of countries following their different policies in their own ways.

Following upon the doctrine of peace and co-existence, or rather even before this doctrine was declared, India had stood on the basic foundation of 'dynamic neutrality' and non-alignment with the military pacts of the two blocs.

This policy has stood the test of the last twelve years and more, although there have been voices, inside India, and pressures from outside, to make the country deviate from this basic foundation of a neutralist's external policy.

Mr. Nehru has countered the arguments of those who wish him to give up the non-alignment policy for some help that India may receive. There are various types of help, he says, but the best help one can receive is to have friendly relations with every country, even with those with whose policies we do not agree. As for the material help, which is essential to India's economic progress, he contends that we have taken it already in the form of financial help or credits. 'Once you go and accept military help, you are inevitably sucked up into the vortex of military thinking. This leads to the giving up of your basic position and leads to active hostility on one side or the other and you are drawn into the cold war immediately, whether you wish it or not.'

Mr. Nehru believes that the attitude India has taken by pursuing this policy of non-alignment has

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created a powerful impression on almost all countries of the world, big and small. They have found that this neutrality offers them an occasional way out in time of serious crisis. If there was no acceptable nation left in the world, then there may be conflicts and rivalries and jealousies and the cold war might lead to a hot war. Mr. Nehru holds the view that, in spite of many failings, the policy India has pursued in regard to international affairs has served India's cause and the cause of world peace.

So far as non-alignment is concerned, he has reinforced his positive stand by dismissing the argument that it is an acrobatic feat of balancing between two sides or sitting on some spike fence. Non-alignment is not a question of balancing between two groups, or powers, or two policies, or ideologies. 'It is a question of trying to do what we think right and in the process of doing it to try to be friendly and co-operative.' Mr. Nehru believes that 'we have the right to express our disagreements with those with whom we differ'. But he wishes to avoid condemnations of those whom he believes to be wrong, for condemnation involves 'assuming airs of moral superiority and makes people angry'. And already, 'there is far too much anger and violence and hatred in the world'.

Non-alignment is, therefore, a positive policy, not a mere feeble neutrality, nor a balancing feat.

And, above all, why should India be on this side or that side of the warring factions, when this country does not want war and the approaches of war-mongers? 'India does not see why it should be pushed about to join one side or the other.'

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The outer framework of the five principles may look like the edicts of Ashoka, but the *Panch Sheel* is a doctrine, arising from the real physical, social and political exigencies of the present Indian position, as an Indian Ocean country, with a common border with China and near the U.S.S.R., and as an example to the still unfree countries of Asia and Africa. It encourages belief in a future where the pool of human and scientific resources of the world may help to build up human lives in the technically under-developed countries.

Therefore, in evolving the doctrine of the five principles, the most important pre-occupation of the ruling intelligentsia would appear to be the creation, in the light of India's operative values and Western democratic concepts, of a genuine synthesis. And, perhaps, this is the only important success it can claim in the evolution of a new Indian pattern of life.

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CHAPTER V

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW INDIAN CIVILISATION

Cultural Consciousness

UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF CO-EXISTENCE, INDIA hopes for exchange of cultures in order to promote understanding between the nations.

Again, the intention of the Indian ruling intelligentsia was to release those forces in its culture which had been suppressed under foreign domination. National independence was to mean not merely political freedom, but the evolution of a civilisation in which the individual human being would have his self-respect restored to him and his self-confidence encouraged, which would give him faith in the best things of India's past, against the Imperialist contempt, and for creative living in the present.

This path had been pursued by the pioneers of Indian thought, in the belief that the deeper relations of humanity may come about. India's political awakening and cultural consciousness had been the twin forces that played upon each other and produced a national movement, which resulted in Independence on August 15, 1947.

And through the century of active defiance against the predatory impulses of Imperialism, when European capitalism was asserting its power, ignoring the contribution of subjugated ancient peoples, mocking

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at them, heaping iniquities up to the sky, and spreading the infection of physical and moral ugliness with the heartless belief in profits, outraging man's sense of the beautiful and the good, the Indian intelligentsia had not spurned that part of the West which had turned to humanity beneficently. Many of the pioneer thinkers acknowledged Europe's greatness, where her greatness was undoubted. India had offered her love with all her heart and paid the homage of its admiration for the heritage of literature and art which has been poured out, as Tagore said ' in an inexhaustible stream, of truth and beauty from the finest minds of the west ', fertilising all countries. No one denied that there were titanic minds in Europe and America, who were sweeping the heights and the depths of the universe with the projections of inventive science, applying the resources of those who still have hearts left to heal the sick and alleviate the miseries of men, which we in India had, through the long process of our dark feudalism, accepted in a spirit of fatalism or hopeless resignation. There was a genuine appreciation in India for the Europe which had made the earth yield plenty, by coaxing and compelling the forces of nature to man's service, and we were dazzled by the search-lights of those who looked beyond the immediate and the obvious and probed the very nature of the stars, often suffering martyrdom for ends which could not be achieved, against the mendacity and narrowness of the ignorant and the powerful. The giants of the European renaissance were honoured in our eyes for accepting failure without acknowledging defeat. The pure stream of human love, of justice, and self-sacrifice,

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which derive from the culture of the centuries, moved us. The spectacle of noble minds, who have stood for the rights of man, irrespective of colour and creed, who have braved insults and humiliations from their own people in fighting for humanity's cause and raising their voices against the origins of militarism, against rapacity and greed, which sometime possessed whole peoples, were examples to us. Those who had made reparations for wrongs, done in the past by their own nations, against the weak, had earned our gratitude. The men who had not lost their faith in the disinterested love of freedom, in the ideals which had no geographical frontiers or national self-seeking, were our models. 'The fountain head of everlasting life', we felt 'had not run dry in Europe'.

Therefore, we did not wish to revive our past culture as a compensation for our paucities in the present. Instead, we began renascent efforts to recognise the literatures of our country in synthesis with whatever Europe could teach us.

The national government has sponsored three academies in order to enable this fusion to grow.

The Sahitya Akademi (the National Akademi of Letters), of which Mr. Nehru has been the chairman since its inception, has undertaken a programme of translations from the classics of the world into the fourteen languages of India. Apart from this, it has established prizes for the best contemporary creative works. And almost all the most significant writers of the country have been the elected, or nominated, members of its large general Council. Of course, the Akademi has still an enormous amount of work to do,

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to fill up the gaps left by the British censorship of advance guard literature of the West; but it is a dynamic young Akademi, full of a radical intelligentsia and not a dead Akademi of the kind known in Europe, elevation to which means that you are a monument and not an active creative writer any more. The dangers of complacency are inherent in any membership of an Akademi, and it is doubtful if the intelligentsia, which is part of the Akademi, will retain its sense of adventure, novelty and criticism. This danger confronts the intelligentsia in all states, which give patronage to culture. But there is room for the individual to make himself felt against institutionalised literature, if he is a genuine rebel. But the patronage by the state is necessary in a country, where the creative arts have been starved of moral support, under an alien Government, and where opportunities for publishing, in the ordinary commercial world, are unequal in the various languages.

Similarly, the Lalit Kala Akademi (National Akademi of Art) has initiated exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, architecture and various seminars, in order to help the growth of art consciousness all over the country. As the task of organising creative activities is very difficult over such a vast landscape, with little or no developments in the visual arts, this Akademi has been somewhat hampered in stimulating widespread consciousness. Art is, anyhow, difficult to promote. Also, the Akademi is too small a body yet to be able to cope with problems, which can only be tackled by decentralisation, by opening of art galleries, studios for poor artists to work in, by procuring

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artists' materials and constant exhibitions in order to educate the onlookers, whose ideas of art were rooted in religion until just recently. Linked up with this Akademi, however, is a national gallery of contemporary art in Delhi, and a programme of publications, which has already resulted in magazines and monographs on ancient and modern arts. The emphasis on contemporary art is still very weak, but that does not mean there is any lack of creative efforts by struggling young artists of unique talent in the country. And there is a great unrest, often bitter, and acute criticism, as it is being generally recognised that controversy is good for art. Fortunately, this Akademi has recognised most of the experimentalists and gives room for heroism and invention, in spite of its original bias in favour of traditionalism.

The third institution, the Sangeet Natak Akademi (National Akademi of Music and Dance) has to some extent, been instrumental in helping the classical styles of music and dance-art by recognising the eminent practitioners and by giving scholarships to students. But this Akademi has, unfortunately, so far concerned itself with transmission of the tradition, without launching on research for the renovation of the theatrical arts . . . . Linked up with this Akademi is the famous Folk Dance Festival, held every year, which has released the urges of the rural masses for expression.

Apart from those three bodies, the government has sponsored the National Book Trust, for publications of important world books, at low cost, in all the fourteen languages of India simultaneously. This Trust has a programme of publications of seven

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kinds before it.

(*a*) The classical literatures of India;

(*b*) Translation of standard books from one language to another;

(*c*) Translation of famous books from foreign languages;

(*d*) Reproduction of Indian paintings, sculptures and other art treasures;

(*e*) Standard works of Indian authors;

(*f*) Standard books in the educational, scientific, artistic and other fields of knowledge;

(*g*) Works of living authors.

The establishment of various science laboratories in different parts of India, besides the new technological institutes, has provided incentives for pure and applied research. The chief of these efforts is the Atomic Energy Commission, which has dedicated itself to the task of Atomic Energy for peace-time construction, refusing to make experiments in atomic bombs.

The Indian Council of Cultural Relations, founded by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, has been instrumental in connecting India with the scholarship and arts of India's neighbours, particularly of the countries of West Asia. Cultural scholarships have been offered to students of Asian and African countries and hostels and friendship houses have been established to encourage contacts between these students of various countries.

If the vitalities at the grass roots of the people have not been quite touched, there are some tentative efforts to keep alive their creativeness by encouraging

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the handicrafts and handloom weaving, which have always been the special pride of India. This method enables the unemployed craftsmen to earn a modest living in the indigenous crafts and keep alive their talents, so that the Industrial revolution does not dam up the genius and the skill of the people, as in the West, and destroy the values of the individual handiwork and co-operation, through the wholesale introduction of merely repetitive and conveyor belt processes.

If it is asked whether Independence has led to the real regeneration of Culture, our answer would be more tentative.

There is no exact parallelism between the political regeneration of a country and its creative development. The deeper issues of life, as they are expressed in poetry or prose, in painting or sculpture, deal with fundamental human values. Therefore, poetry, for instance, becomes a criticism of life. This requires a constant questioning or rebellion of the creative artist. And even disruption is necessary.

In the progress from a patriarchal society to democratic forms, all the classic questions pose themselves in India, some of which have already been asked in the West. Can state patronage leave the artist free to say what he likes? And what is his own responsibility in regard to expression? How much licence can he take? Is it possible to encourage revolt in a country where the mass media are used, as even in the so called 'free' societies, for the purpose of veiled propaganda, by prohibition and inhibition of facts or feelings, which the current policy of the party in power operate to safeguard its interest? And what is the

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remedy against the commercialisation of the arts by profit-seeking dealers and publishers, who resort to blatant publicity, speculation and other corrupt practices for personal gain? Is it likely that the honest artist, or writer, can ever earn a living by his creative work in a market where the more sensational bad art is promoted extensively, while anything that exposes the lies and hypocrisy of society is neglected and declared unpublishable? Isn't it well known that few rising poets can publish their poetry through ordinary publishers, 'because poetry does not sell'? And if an artist or writer cannot live on the sale of his creative work, what kind of help can an enlightened state give him to assure his creative output, without attaching strings to the aid given? Is it likely that the state can at least give speedy help to *bona fide* sick or indigent artists, to enable them to tide over emergencies, without the prolonged delays of the bureaucratic grant-in-aid? Again, is it possible, in the one world, already achieved by faster communications, for the UNESCO bodies to create museums, galleries, publishing facilities, so that the heritage of humanity can be pooled and given to all peoples?

As our country is one of the new free countries, all such questions could be profitably asked here, through seminars. And though answers to the many problems may not be forthcoming, we could set the example for co-existence, and work to strengthen the world republic of letters and arts, where there is much more goodwill than there is among the politicians, in spite of acute differences on the techniques and contents of creative work. Perhaps, our non-alignment could

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help us to bring together those self-righteous intellectuals of all sides, who suspect each other of being traitors, to reveal to them the fact that the extension of culture and education to wider and wider areas is being withheld because of petty cold war prejudices even among the members of the intelligentsia. It is likely that the Indian intelligentsia may help to make our time an age of solidarity rather than of hatred and despair.

At any rate, it is necessary for us to link up with the outside world from our parochial positions. For, as everyone knows, the techniques of literature and art have changed vastly through the influence exercised by the forces of the giant new industrial revolution in Europe, America and Russia. We have accepted this new industrial revolution as part and parcel of our life, because we wish to create a highly organised agro-industrial society in India. The machine forms have brought new values, such as Democracy, Secularism, Socialism and the Five Year Plans. And many of our bad traditional values will wither away under the impact of our newly accepted social forms.

The workers in Bombay or Calcutta, cannot now observe the caste system, however strong their prejudices may be, because they have to draw water together from the same pump, travel in the same train and eat in the same canteen. The changing modes of furniture, dress, and habitation, are part of a new civilisation pattern, which will inevitably percolate among our people, because they are more convenient and cheaper. False reverence, the sentimental family, and fake religion may disappear through the revolt of youth and changing social urges.

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It would be untruthful to say that the enjoyment and understanding of Indian Culture has already become possible among wide sections of our people. First of all, there are few culture centres in the seven hundred thousand villages of our country, which make up the bulk of the population of this land. There is some work being carried on, in this connection, by the Community Development Ministry, but it is in the nature of pilot projects.

Apart from this, the education programme of the government has not succeeded in bringing the bulk of the school-going children into the orbit of light. The teachers are still paid very low salaries and little effort has been made to change the curriculum in order to bring it into line with the demands of the new Socialist society. The drift towards mass production of graduates goes on and privileges in education have not been diminished but only increased. The emphasis on technical education excludes humanities in actual instruction. The question of medium of instruction has been hampered by controversies about language, and though Hindi has been accepted as an official common language, the translation of world books into this language in order to prepare the way for thorough instruction, in the next generation, has not been organised on any clear basis. The bridge of the English language is still effective in connecting the various parts of India and the outside world. The intelligentsia is confused about applying traditional values to education and there is a tremendous complacency about the preparation of a new generation for responsibilities in the future. And the question of educa-

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tion and peace has hardly been studied in the light of the aggressive tendencies fostered by the suppressions of feudalism as well as by the modern machine.

There is a profound truth affecting the personal life of people in any country: 'Only the outward life of a nation is made by a plan'. The actual criss-cross of life, the resolving of conflicts between the private and public cause, and the sense of purpose, or value, can only be learnt through the creative arts, because the sensitive writer or the artist, suffers in order to expiate the pain of mankind and thus heightens the consciousness and intensifies the emotions. Our creative writers seem not to face this truth so much as they worry about personal salvation through prayers and austerities, when they are not completely commercialist in outlook. The few who are above the dilemma tend to be cynical.

The task of living in any age is difficult enough. But, to live in our difficult age and synthesise human cultures, in order to prevent the vast death that awaits mankind through the threatened war, and to release humanity for the tasks of peace, requires men who will open our hearts to compassion and our minds to truth. The sources of inspiration for achieving this release are there, but they are inhibited by commercialism in the creative arts, by the misuse of film for providing *kisch* culture, and by the refusal of the artists to face realities, because escapism is a much more paying proposition. The inventions of the age may have prepared the doom of the defenceless peoples with hydrogen bombs, but many creative artists remain addicted, in despair against the politicians, to entirely

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private worlds or they take refuge behind pseudo-metaphysical platitudes, feeding upon their inner lives without awareness of *bhakti-yoga* or the religion of actualities. The failure of great works to arise in the languages of India, or of great paintings and sculptures, is not by itself a sign of any lack of vitality. Only, there have not been enough books of knowledge in the languages of our country, or enough experimentation, or lifelong devotion by pioneers in the creative field, to supply the background for the creation of heightened books of passion. Mankind expects today not merely an academic insight into past history, but a way of looking at the problems of our own time, in order that we may solve them and live more abundantly and more intensely. Men in India also demand a way of life now, a contemporary philosophy of life, which may approximate more organically to our democratic secular Socialist society of the Five Year Plans, and give some significance to the history which we are making, without getting us bogged down in the backwaters of mere imitative capitalist suburbanism.

The Need for a Philosophy of Life

All those who think of the problems of life, and even those who do not think but merely work and live empirically as ordinary human beings, have some kind of philosophy of life. This philosophy is not a monopoly of philosophers. Every human being is a kind of philosopher. Without some kind of philosophical or ideological approach, we have no yardstick

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by which to measure anything. And yet, though we have become a modern state in India, with a ' Socialist Pattern ' of approach towards problems, the philosophies of life professed by the most important leaders of the intelligentsia, are either various re-interpretations of ancient Indian thought or intellectual positions relevant to local problems in Great Britain, France or America. We have few coherent systems of thought, which may be in accord with the impulses and ideas of our needs and interests in the 20th century. Mr. Nehru's education has been mostly in science, law and history. And, as he has not recently gone to jail, he has not had the time to work out the ideology behind the democratic socialist society of which he is the head.

The younger intelligentsia is frightened of the older professors and dare not come out to challenge the validity of *reviving* the exalted idealist approach of the Vedanta philosophies, in our time.

The efforts of Mr. Nehru to put forward the philosophy of the Buddha as an acceptable doctrine for India, during the 2500 year centenary of the Buddha, was a heroic gesture, which, however, failed to arouse consciousness about the meaning of life among the intelligentsia.

Similarly, the attempt of the late Dr. Ambedkar to embrace Buddhism, with all his scheduled caste followers, has not solved the problem of the political and social rights of the untouchables.

The recent researches of Prof. Debi Chatterji in the *Lokayata*, people's philosophies of India, reveal that the point of view of the masses has remained instinctive

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and integral only to the primitive Communist society of the past ages, surviving in the form of magical cults among the poor, right through to the tantric doctrines of our present iron age.

After our tentative researches in past philosophies, it is possible to say that there were four or five attempts at philosophies based on the dignity of man in the past of India. As these humanisms have some relevance for our present day society, I will note them below.

The first humanist wave of Indian thought was represented by the teaching of the Buddha, who, revolted against Hindu metaphysical idealism and gave attention to the ignominious position to which the lower caste Hindu population, and the poor, had been reduced by the Brahmanical hierarchy. The compulsion of tenderness from which Gautama started to think about the problems of life was evoked by his contemplation of the lot of a sick man, an old man, and a poor peasant ploughing the soil. The sensitiveness to the pain of these suffering mortals became to him the symbol of the pain of the universe. The Buddha rejected the idea of God, preached the eightfold path of right action and right thought, as he wandered across Northern India. And most of those who listened to him were the down-trodden peoples who had lost their status as human beings in the society of that time. In the long history of feudalism, not only in India, but in the various countries of Asia, this message of tenderness for man remained a vital faith, until the corruption of the upper hierarchy of monks of the Buddhist order led to the decay of Buddhism.

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The next great wave of humanism characterised the teachings of the mediaeval Hindu saints, each of whom rose from among the people against the hierarchical excesses of the Brahmins and preached the ideas of social and human justice within the Hindu fold. They succeeded in humanising Hindu religion for centuries, when this faith was on the defensive against foreign attack.

The third wave came with Islam, which though fanatical in so far as it converted people by force, was yet proclaiming the brotherhood of men, with sanctions in the individual soul, specially in the Prophet Muhammad, who was to intervene on the judgment day on behalf of all Muslims before God. The wide influence which Islam exercised on the Hindu lower castes was due to the casteless, egalitarian and democratic message of Islam.

The fourth great wave was represented by Guru Nanak and the unitarian religion of Sikhism which he founded. Nanak stood against caste, against sectarianism, for the unity of the Hindu and Muhammadan outlooks, through one God; and the appeal of his teaching, as of those of his followers, was mainly to outcastes and the very poor peasants of Northern India.

The fifth wave was heralded by the renascent thinking of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his colleagues, who wished to negate the worst aspects of Hinduism, and of Christianity, and founded the Brahmo-Samaj in Bengal. This current swept over the mind of Rabindranath Tagore, who taught specially, at the end of his life, a religion of man, with mystical sanctions in an

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unknown presence he could not define. The humanism of Gandhi, which was also not defined but followed instinctively from his dedication to men of all faiths, specially the lowliest untouchables, permeated the mass consciousness to a larger extent than any doctrine of man had done since the Buddha. Essentially, however, Gandhi's thinking is allied to that of Tagore's, because he also sought sanctions in God, or in the inner voice, which he claimed to have heard from time to time.

The sixth wave owed its inspiration to the late M. N. Roy, a Communist revolutionary, who played some part in the Russian Revolution, disagreed with Stalin and formed the Radical Humanist party of India. M. N. Roy was extremely well read in the scientific literature of our age and came nearest to defining the outlook of the young India during a period when Socialism was not very much talked about.

The seventh wave is represented by the work of Jawaharlal Nehru and his followers, in so far as the preamble of the constitution of India defined, under his leadership, the service of Indian humanity as the goal of our country's progress. But as Nehru has not had the time to sum up the ethos of the Five Year Plan Society in clear philosophical terms, I am venturing to put down a general interpretation of what the democratic, secular, socialist pattern of society may mean as a philosophy of life for our people. The tentative hypothesis I put forward is in line with international humanism, which is current in various countries of the world, except that I am defining it as from the point of view of a contemporary Indian.

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This philosophy which, from my point of view, is as much a protest against the various idealistic systems current in India as a brief exposition of the implications of our new outlook, does not pretend to be any more than a plea for harmony among the intelligentsia to share a minimum common outlook, in spite of differing inner sanctions. Only, at the cost of seeming assertive, I would like to contend that it is a socialist scientific humanism, with an emphasis on human and moral values, without the vagueness implicit in the 'Socialist Pattern' of Nehru, which hides many sins of omission and commission by its mere vagueness.

On the other hand, I am opposed to those, like Professor Michael Polyani, who decry humanism, because they feel that the very plea for the perfection of human society has resulted in 'moral excesses'. It is true that the ideals of enlightenment have often brought revolt against the existing political order. But I welcome such revolt as a necessary part of the balancing process of history.

Also, it is not possible for me to reject the premises of secular rationalism, because rationalism has served the world already in giving several fresh starting points for social and intellectual progress and towards giving dignity to the individual, when romantic mysticism often failed to recognise the primacy of all other individuals except of the mystic himself. Although reason mostly follows the emotions, and thus lends itself to egoism, it can be humanised if both emotion and reason are made to serve altruistic ends.

Equally, it is not possible to reject nationalism as a terroristic ideology, merely because European

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nationalism, founded on the principle of the chosen race, colonialism and exploitation of other peoples, often imposed conformism of thought and behaviour on its peoples and led to militarism. For nationalism can be the urge of supressed peoples to freedom. And if it does not lead to myth making, it is not likely, in Asia and Africa, to become the jingoist Imperialism, which it has tended to become in the West. Nationalism as an attachment to language, dress, education and, as the aspiration to throw off foreign domination, provides opportunities to millions of people to become human after centuries of oppression and degradation. Perhaps, the decentralisation of national power, as soon as possible, can guard against the dangers of the central leadership seizing power, as well as the attempt to elevate patriotism to universal proportions.

Perhaps, the humanism I put forward is against all organised faiths, though I feel that, by relegating religion to private conscience, the tasks of social reconstruction are more easily possible. Freedom of conscience is, however, itself a touch-stone of humanism. Only, it is gradually more amenable to the sanctions of enlightened emotion, reason, science and imagination, and goes to make that something unconquerable in the spirit of man, which is proof against perversions, untruth, social injustice and oppression.

Although I would like to define this humanist philosophy for India today as the acceptance of man as a centre of all our thinking, feeling and activity, and the service of man for the greater good of all humanity, in the material world, under the sanctions of imagination, reason and creative democracy, I am

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not attempting here to explain all the implications of this philosophy. I would like to recommend it, in the first instance, shorn of much controversial terminology, as a working philosophy for our own people, as they prepare for the welfare state. I do not exclude the profession of philosophers from looking at it for what it is worth, though I am conscious that the snobbery of academic thought, in which I myself had my early training, may prevent the acceptance of a doctrine which attempts to integrate humanism with Socialism. I do not claim any specific originality for this humanism, except that my emphasis on the attainment of a classless society may have the fault of barging in where angels fear to tread. I do not even profess that this humanist outlook gives promise of hasty fulfilment of all human desires to people on our earth. In fact, several non-humanist, retrogressive societies have survived in the modern world. But if the aim of human life is to evolve individuals, potentially equal and free, then it is likely that, ultimately, a humanistic society created out of struggle may be better fitted to take mankind into a future, without war, and afford greater opportunities to release the masses than societies which wish to exterminate others. Certainly, this humanism does not promise anything in the supernatural world. But this humanism does make room for the various aspects of human nature in our own time and seeks to restore love as a living value among men. And though it sets up imagination and reason as a final arbiter of what is valuable in human life, it gives scope for the emotional and intuitional side of man by insisting

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on creative art as the method for the achievement of what is generally understood by the terms truth, goodness and beauty.

I do not exclude the many other humanisms which are current in the modern age, because I am fully aware of the lessons of history and the richness of the philosophic traditions of the world. Only I am on the side of those who stand for a comprehensive humanism in our time, derived from the historical process itself, different in local emphasis, but fundamentally addicted to the concept of 'the whole man' everywhere.

The main task of this humanism is to present as consistent and intelligible a doctrine, comprising some of the implications of a possible Indian scientific socialism and to make the synthesis of reality and aspiration in the minds and actions of living men.

Let me put down the chief premises of this humanist philosophy:

(1) This humanism places man in the centre of all things. And it struggles against all those forces of class, caste and race, which stand in the way of the emergence of human beings in their full dignity.

(2) This humanism believes that matter precedes mind in any metaphysical attitude towards the Universe. All forms of supernatural thoughts are myths and legends woven to justify the aspirations of man in the face of the nature gods. The whole of nature presents the totality of being and this cosmos is a constantly changing and intricate system of relations of matter and energy, which have existed

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long before human consciousness arose. Man has to achieve harmony with nature rather than merely fight it in every direction. Man is, and becomes, what he wants by transforming nature.

(3) This humanism believes that man is an evolutionary product of the matter of which he is part. The discoveries of human genius, with its many laws and facts, have revealed that mind is indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of the body. And that the unity of body and personality is indivisible, having no conscious survival after death.

(4) This humanism, which puts man in the centre of the Universe, believes that human beings possess the potential power to understand many problems, hitherto undreamt of, both in the relation to themselves and to nature. Imagination, reason and the scientific method are the weapons for this knowledge. And the courage of men, without prejudice or pride in facing truth, is the only pre-condition of this approach.

(5) This humanism believes, in opposition to all theories of fatalistic acceptance of God, predestination and determinism, that human beings, conditioned by man's history, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action. And, within certain limits, set by objective circumstances, every man is master of his own destiny.

(6) This humanism believes in an ethic which is based on human psychology and human values, in this earthly existence, achieved through the relations of persons and persons, and persons and

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society. It considers the highest goal of life to be the conquest of pain, and the realisation of social and economic freedom and mental and emotional awareness in order to gain wholeness. This is the highest goal of mankind, irrespective of nation, race or creed.

(7) This humanism believes that the individual attains full manhood by integrating his personal satisfactions and continuous creative self-development through significant creative work with the hand, the heart and the brain, such as may contribute to man's renewal, to the welfare of the community and express the love of life, the awareness of death, and thus balance the essentially unstable and the maladjusted human personality, involved in the inevitable conflicts of existence in this Universe.

(8) This humanism believes in the widest and deepest possible development of creative art and the awareness of beauty. It considers the transformation of nature, through the human imagination, to be the core of the aesthetic experience. And it places poetry and creative art as a pervasive reality in the lives of men, in order to help the emergence of integrated personalities through the experience of words, colour, sound and sensitive realisation of the undertones of inner worlds of faculty and experience.

(9) The humanism believes in the brotherhood of man through the affirmations of love. The achievement of peace through the settlement of disputes by discussion and negotiation becomes the most important ideal of our time. The application of new creative techniques to achieve a basic standard

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of living will be the instrument for a future economic order, both national and international as against the self-indulgence and ease of the rich. And genuine democracy will be realised by the 'withering away of the state', gradually and progressively, at the time when men have learnt to rule themselves and grown to the status of integrated individuals.

(10) This humanism believes in the application of imagination, reason and scientific method in all human undertakings, making room for the understanding of different instincts and emotions. It encourages the democratic procedure, including full freedom of expression and civil liberty, in all political, economic and cultural life.

(11) This humanism believes in the constant questioning of the basic assumptions and convictions of inventive science, employing, throughout, human tests based on moral values. In this sense, this humanism does not wish to be dogmatic by asserting reason on the one extreme and postulating intuition on the other extreme. Instead, this humanism remains a developing philosophy, open to experiment and testing its theses in the light of newly discovered facts, fresh insights and greater understanding.

(12) This humanism wishes to connect itself to international humanism, so that, in spite of differences, a comprehensive universalist outlook may prevail on the basic issues common to mankind, and co-existence may be established and compassion for the failings of men engendered.

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The Living and the Dead

If this is the kind of humanism which I feel India aspires to, then, obviously, it demands a humanist civilisation. From the loose manner in which the word 'civilisation' has been used so far, let it not be inferred that we wish for what is called Western civilisation. We may want some of its interior values and the products of its culture, but we are not interested in emulating the ghastly cycle of its wars, to ensure its profit system, its vested interests and its processes of exploitation.

Perhaps the civilisation produced by the Industrial Revolution of the West is a tragic example of the exploiting process, because it has been sustained throughout its heyday by the sweat of whole colonial peoples, barring, of course, such examples as the Nordic countries, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Not many people may have heard of the miseries of the enclosure system, of the slow assassination of millions of small craftsmen, who were dragooned into bleak, soulless towns, for a shilling a day, and churned up in the power-driven machines of those gaunt new factories in the Midlands. The philosophers deplored the negation of human dignity and the loss of social and spiritual values in the subhuman slum life, where the few rich and powerful employers condemned the erstwhile peasants and artisans, but the lone voices of the intellectuals were not heard. In fact intelligence became suspect. For it was a disability, a hindrance to production, sowing the seeds of doubt about mechanical work, and corroding the very foundations

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of the new exploiting social order. The chain of repetitive machines in the industries was multiplied to make more profit for the capitalists, and all creative opportunities were denied in the interests of money. In order to keep the neo-serfs in a tolerable state of contentment, all kinds of mind-killing diversions were introduced, the instinct for gambling was played upon and the bifurcation of people into classes was encouraged, to build an order in which the values of 'get rich quick and kick every man into the ditch', were to become widespread. The glorification of money, of social snobbery and national power, based on armed might and conquest of colonies and empires, resulted in a surplus for the few, to indulge in luxury goods and escapist diversions, while it led to the social and cultural impoverishment of the bulk of the people. The moral and social sensibility of men were so completely weakened that they willingly acquiesced in their own inferior status, their cultural degradation, and aped the so-called upper orders, helping actively in the suppression of 'black, brown and yellow' peoples, who were to become the new proletariat of the 'white' races. The success of the various Western nations in achieving this transformation was uneven. So the advance of one led to jealousies among the others and each of them began to prepare for war against the other, to wrest colonies from those who had acquired more space in Asia, Africa and America, in the initial bid for securing raw materials and markets. God was bought up through the subservient churches, and, often, the cross went side by side with the musket, machine gun and warship to convert the heathen to

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the way of the only son of God. Mammon reigned supreme. The First World War of 1914–1918, smashed up a generation and ushered the concepts of Socialism and no more war, and the intellectuals began to question the rapacious greed of Western capitalism.

The civilisation based on the cash-nexus, which had fragmented society, as well as the individual, and in which people lived on the excitements provided by football pools, horse racing, greyhound racing, cinema, horror and crime books and television, survived the First World War blood bath and became endemic. The dexterous use of the mass media of communication enabled the ruling cliques to promote for themselves behind the smoke-screen of buildings a new peace. The victors of the First World War had 'formed a company of grave diggers to allot the graves'. But the ghosts of rival capitalisms refused to be buried. And Fascism, Nazism and Militarism, arose to threaten the old dug-in Imperialisms, again on the question of colonies, now called *lebensraum*. The glut of consumers' goods in the industrially forward countries had led to the identification of the good life with the maximum consumption of luxury goods. And now the greed of those who had been left behind or crushed in the rat race, like the Germans, the Italians and the Japanese, was enshrined by their demagogic rulers into the worship of riches and material abundance and the divine right of the 'superior', more highly armed, races, to enjoy these by enslaving the inferior races. The Imperialists helped to arm the Fascists in the hope that, if they wished for territorial gains, they could secure these from the Socialist Soviet Union

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rather than from the West. Unfortunately for the Westerners, the Nazis turned upon those who had nourished them, and the second bigger, and bloodier, world conflict began, encompassing the whole world in its vast and intricate stranglehold. Millions of innocents perished in this giant conflict and the newest and most frightful weapons of destruction were invented to preserve the 'freedoms' of the Atlantic Charter. Needless to say, these very freedoms were denied to the colonies for the possession of which this renewed blood-thirsty struggle had been launched. And, again, efforts were made to demolish the very roots of Socialism. Communist Russia, which had sought to defend itself by all the means open to war and diplomacy had to fall back before it could survive. After seven years, the Western capitalist Imperialist democracies, allied to a toughened Stalinist Soviet Union, won the battle of attrition against the Nazis, Fascists and Militarists — but, on V-Day, the West announced through its press, the necessity of a third world war to banish Communism once and for all from the earth. The spectre that haunted the Imperialists had, however, already spread to half the world, and the erstwhile Western empires and colonies in Asia and Africa were demanding freedom.

The capitalist greed for more raw materials, and larger markets for its consumers' goods, reached hitherto unprecendented heights in the U.S.A., itself at one time a colony of the British Empire. 'In many ways the U.S.A. once the owner of the seemingly inexhaustible natural treasure, was in danger of becoming a have-not nation', declared *Time* in 1951.

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Of course, 'civilisation' had progressed here 'and U.S. was using more iron, steel, petrol, newsprint, rubber and almost everything else than all the world put together'. And it appointed its chief god 'High standard of Living', the 'American way of Life' and 'Freedom' as the chief gods of the world, making a trinity in whose name it began to build military and economic alliances all over the globe. There had to be an enemy. So Communism was declared to be the arch-devil, which was threatening all the wonderful values which the U.S.A., as the military and spiritual leader of the Western and the noncommunist Eastern world, stood for. 'Those who are not with us are against us', was the unwritten law of the American statesmen. And, as the new Asian and African countries, which had wrested political freedom from the Western Imperialists, were too busy trying to put their houses in order after centuries of exploitation and were neutralist in the crusade against Communism, each one of them was dubbed pro-communist and bullied and coerced through the local agents, to join up in the holy crusade for a third world war. The American atom bombs needlessly thrown on a nearly vanquished Japan at the end of the Second World War were improved upon through hazardous nuclear tests, until a stockpile of seventy-five thousand of the most deadly hydrogen bombs was reported to be ready to annihilate Russia. The North Atlantic Military alliances of the West has bases from which patrols of live bombs go out twenty-four hours of the day and night, to circumvent any moves by the Reds, and the danger of accidental war breaking out is discounted. Meanwhile the

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atmosphere of cold war is deliberately engendered in order to poison the minds and hearts of the people, lest they might suddenly see through the subterfuges of their rulers and relax the attitude of hatred, which has been built up on top of the fear of the hordes of Asia swooping down upon the Christian civilisation of the West and destroying it at one fell swoop. Those who consider this propaganda quite unreal, ask for disarmament, and they are told that 'we must be prepared for the worst, while we talk to the recalcitrant Russians about the banning of the nuclear tests, the reduction of stockpile and some bargain on conventional arms'.

Of course, the U.S.S.R. has been reacting against the threats of the Western Imperialists by outbidding them in outer space, rocket-missile research, while building up a stockpile of almost fifty-five thousand hydrogen bombs, and collecting all the communist countries into the Warsaw Pact, through which each communist state is pledged to come to the help of the other. The more hostile the Imperialists seem, the more intense becomes the defence mechanism of the Communists, as witnessed by the rigid stand of the People's Republic of China, after a decade or more of non-admission into the United Nations Organisation by the U.S.A. and its lesser partners. And, although the Stalinists may still believe in the policy of 'tooth for a tooth and eye for an eye', the comparative restraint of the U.S.S.R. has been shown by the fact that they have not gone to war in spite of the provocations offered by the various military bases with which the Western alliance, and especially the Americans, are ringed

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around the communist countries. Also, the new leadership of the Soviet Union has been pressing for total disarmament and negotiation on outstanding disputes, which have so far been evaded by clever arguments and very little action. This has, of course, led to the strengthening of the Stalinists in the U.S.S.R. itself and the intensification of the arms race and nuclear tests, and bullying and blustering by China.

As the conflict between the two giant blocs deepens, the liberated ex-colonies of Western Imperialism, economically destitute and spiritually frustrated, seek to renew themselves from the devastation of years of neglect, while the still unfree colonies of the European powers in Africa are struggling against the most ruthless and tyrannical oppression with bare hands. The ushering in of democratic and socialist forms into these old societies is complicated by the attempts to get economic aid without political strings attached and by insidious interventions of all kinds including the use of arms intended for the war between ideologies for the suppression of the liberation movements in the still unfree countries. Imperialist statesmen are not ashamed to ally themselves with the Racialists in Africa, and sometimes openly declare that they share the 'development of human personality' as a common value in the colonies with fascists like Salazar of Portugal. And largescale and organised wars of reconquest have been fought by some of the Western Imperialists against the African peoples, with the use of NATO arms, and a complete disregard of human values. So that, in spite of the extension of the realm of appetites and indulgences among the ruling circles, there is evident,

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among the younger generation, a restlessness and despair against the spiritual corruption that follows upon the breakdown of all moral scruples. On the other hand, the intellectuals condemn science, which is mostly concerned with facts and is used by the politicians. And they do not see that different societies can have different values, and that the real task is to correlate these differences of social and political outlook, allow free competition between ideologies in peace and co-existence, and hope that the human instinct for inner freedom will win. They do not even accept that the intellectual is better fitted for the tasks of reconstruction than the party politician.

What is known to us as the capitalist Western civilisation is thus obviously in decay. The inner corrosion is even worse than the outer instability. Whether it be the 'American way of life', or European arrogance, this order, based on exploitation and money values, denies self-expression and creativeness, substituting the multiplication of needless wants of pleasure, competitive gladiatorial associations, that live on excitement, for human solidarity, and self-indulgences for genuine calm. There is no doubt that this civilisation seems dynamic, but even a dog can run round and round chasing its own tail and seem to be highly active. Actually, the momentum of its advance is sustained by armaments, which betoken violence and war. And, as the machines of destruction begin to dictate their own terms, the inner disquiet gives way to widespread neuroses, and the lack of connection between a man's efforts to earn a living, his work and his soul, culminating in a lack of responsi-

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bility, which creates its own mushrooms of doubts on the barren hills of the tormented sensibility. Thus man, the most timid of animals, who has hardly escaped from the fears of the prehistoric ages, assumes postures of strength, which lead to fanatically held last-ditch prides, to defend the indefensible and to participation in the joint hysteria of one community against another or one nation against another. And, all the time, the cue for passion comes from the insecurities at the root of the concept of affluence, which lead to the denial of human genius and the innate ability of man to create at a higher level than ever before those things he needs for the renewal of his life breath. The egoism which feeds on the pleasures of the slot machine is the deepest enemy of the shared cultures of the earlier, more primitive civilisations, where wrongs were righted by the rediscovery of moral truths. But now this amoral Western civilisation is beyond all morality, unable to correct itself, short of the renunciation of permanent war as a weapon for settling international disputes and without putting the individual and his renewal from the midst of the death forces at the centre of the new teaching. The abandonment of the lusts of power, money and privilege, and the generous extension of bread and wine to the millions of 'untouchables' of all countries may alone redress the dangerous imbalance. Perhaps, the satisfaction of the genuine needs of all human beings may enable science, misused till now, to help in the manifold and intricate tasks of rebuilding the creative societies. . . . At the moment, however, there is no room for complacency.

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Certainly, the predominantly false aspects of Western civilisation cannot recommend themselves to growing new peoples. All we can say when we see it heading for destruction is: 'Remember the splendours created by your painters, and poets and makers of symphonies. And limit your appetites for things so that others may live.'

We do not then in India wish to import Western civilisation entire or copy it. We wish to take from it only the creative values, the abilities in the arts and skills which make men into gods.

In theory, at least, the direction given to the new India by its most important thinkers has been guided by genuine fears about the wholesale imitation of the perversions of the machine civilisation. But there is no need to disguise the fact that compromises on the essential question of whether we are to be a socialist commonwealth of a new Indian kind, or a carbon copy of American capitalism, have introduced confusion of aims which makes our policies worse confounded. The new American policy to absorb the neutralists, with large-scale bribes of aid, poses a threat, because it may inhibit the release of that dynamism at the grass roots which can come from the use of our own hands and brains to build our own lives at every level, from the village community upwards. The fear of aggression from our neighbours also leads to the militarisation of our minds, leading to the use of precious human and material resources for defence rather than for education and re-education for peace. And there seems to be not much hope, at the moment, of our reversion to the inner objectives of building a different kind of

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society from the West, until the cold war, in its many implications, engulfs us from all sides.

But the choice before us, and before mankind, is also dramatic: are we to achieve the transition from the first three thousand years of man's history of war to the next hundred years of peace, or are we all to drift, slowly but inexorably, into the third world war?

On the choice of either alternative depends all hopes for the future.

Of course, the adventure of preventing war and of helping to establish a human order beckons uncommitted countries like India.

And here we may reckon up the odds: confusion persists.

In India the vast apathy of millions of people in the grip of many old dead customs and beliefs on which are superimposed the new-fangled fashions of the West, does not easily yield to living impulses. There are a number of integrated individuals who have assimilated some of the best traits of Indianness and genuine Westernism. The bulk of the thinking people, however, are unable to get out of their grooves of imitative Anglo-Saxon habits on the one hand and orthodox revivalism on the other. Some of the occidentalists have acquired a thin veneer of superficial Europeanism, like neckties and ball-room dancing, but refuse to understand the culture of Europe and look like montage-men, bad compromises between East and West, while the revivalists hold tenaciously to the 'custom' mentality even when they use aeroplanes of the jet and atomic age and need a new kind of philosophy to cope with

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the problems of modern man.

The difficulties of evolving a new pattern of civilisation in the brief space of a generation, in a country as big as Europe without Russia, full of diverse peoples, with intricate ramifications of individual belief and social conditioning are enormous. It would be a miracle, indeed, if the assimilation of various discordant strands of culture had taken place in the short time since India became free. Certainly, a new Indian culture, the poetry of the new Indian civilisation, may need the struggle of many generations before it comes to fruition. For even the more modest aim of evolving a 'Socialist Pattern' seems, in the present context of sharply opposed economic, social and linguistic urges, to be difficult enough in our country. And the prospect of drifting into the moods, attitudes and habits of acquisitive Western civilisation seems frightening in the extreme.

All that can be claimed perhaps, is that the direction of a new kind of humanist socialist civilisation has been set, which does not believe in violence as do even some of the liberal societies of the West, and which is not based on the fatalist hypothesis of ancient India. The outlines define the geography of a possible pattern, waiting for flesh and blood to possess it with a dynamic of change commensurate with the noble aspirations before us.

So that while it is obvious that India may be evolving a contemporary life concept of its own, it would be dishonest to proclaim it as anything like a finished thing and to pretend that it is any more than an unconscious tentative life-view, with many unresolved

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conflicts, challenges and contradictions in it.

Let us record some of the actual adverse features as well as the bad social and mental habits which corrode the foundations of our hopes for the emergence of the new pattern.

IS THERE A FUNDAMENTAL UNITY IN INDIA? CASTEISM, PAROCHIALISM, COMMUNALISM, LINGUISM. First of all, it is an ugly fact that since the liberation of India from foreign rule, the unity achieved in our country, through the struggle against Imperialism, seems to have given place to much disruption, based on casteism, parochialism, communalism, and linguism. Therefore grave doubts have arisen about the possibility of achieving the 'Socialist Pattern', because the concepts of political unity and a secular democratic state themselves seem to be at stake. And many people have begun to ask: 'Is there a fundamental unity in India'?

The answer to this question seems, during the transition, when the many forces of chaos, confusion, bitter rivalry and self-aggrandisement are active, to be certainly not in the affirmative.

It would seem that the release of the acquisitive urges not only among upper groups and classes, but also in the stronger and the more dominant areas, at the cost of the less developed states, has created bitterness, which threatens to divide the country into so many different parts. The opportunism of the ruling Congress Party, or rather of certain reactionary groups within it, has tended to set a bad example to chauvinist sections in various regions of the country.

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For instance, the Congress Party allied itself to the communalist parties, the Muslim League, the Hindus and the Christians, in order to defeat the essentially social democratic Communist Party, which was in power in the small state of Kerala in 1960. Similarly it has allowed the fanatical Hindu protagonists of Hindi language to suppress the Urdu language, because, though spoken and read by millions of Hindus and Muslims alike, Urdu was accepted by Pakistan as the official language. And the actual treatment of minorities, in spite of good laws, is discriminatory. The distribution of jobs to the have-nots is hampered by nepotism of the majority communities and conscious or unconscious laws against the underprivileged. The class order seems to perpetuate itself through the ruling party's affiliations with capitalism for election funds. The opposition parties, Communist, Socialist, Swatantra, are equally opportunist in aligning themselves with communal parties while the communal parties are frankly sectarian.

Thus the efforts to achieve a practical policy of peaceful co-existence and integration at home have been half-hearted and inadequate, leading to fratricidal riots between Assamese and Bengalis in Assam and between Hindus and Muslims in Madhya Pradesh, while there is a seething bitterness underneath the surface, mainly based on economic rivalries, which can easily become communal passion. The building up of monopolies in certain areas leads to suspicions and fears.

The adoption of a *lingua franca*, by the exaltation of one language called Hindi, above the others, and

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the refusal, even by Government spokesmen, to adopt the emergent spoken Hindustani, which is understood, for ordinary communication, in north, south, east and west and centre, has proved to be a disuniting factor.

There is no doubt that the centre has given much thought to the programme for achieving a more natural and conscious unity than we have known in the past. But the risks inherent in the survival of the dominant capitalist structure have not been faced with any degree of intensity, and the value of cohesion has not been accepted by various sections of the bureaucracy in administering the benefits of the public sector of the plan. The first refusal of the Union Government to concede the linguistic states of Maharashtra and Gujerat, because big business did not want to lose the rich Bombay city to Maharashtra, showed how money-power still plays a decisive part in our country in spite of the 'Socialist Pattern'.

In view of this the doctrine of the five principles of co-existence and peace has been rightly criticised by foreigners, because though recommended as a recipe for better international relations, we have not been able to practise this ideal among our own various states, communities, religions, and languages.

During election time, secularism tends to be forgotten by almost all political parties, and alliances with communal parties, as also with higher or lower caste groups, are forged for temporary ends. Underneath the facade of one happy family, the minorities, even in the ruling party, feel insecure.

In an interview given by Jawaharlal Nehru to the

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journalist, R. K. Karanjia, on the question, 'Is India a Nation?' the Prime Minister has tried to give a deeper analysis on which he has based the positive conclusion that, given time, we may be able to achieve a more conscious unity than we have had in the past and strengthen the essential unity at the base of the diversity of our people.

And yet, speaking at the Congress session held in Bhavnagar in January 1961, he was constrained to ask people: 'How much communalism, casteism, provincialism or language chauvinism, lingers in each one of us?'

Some of us believe that our intelligentsia has failed to understand that the problem of disruption can be solved only if we analyse the situation in the context of the two ideas which have been struggling for power within our national liberation movement.

What were these two concepts?

There is no need to disguise the fundamental fact that, in spite of the basic cultural unity, which came down as a residual value, through the main religions, there were long years of conflict between Hinduism and Buddhism, between Hinduism and Islam and Sikhism, as well as between all these and Christianity. And, within Hinduism, there was a constant imbalance between the castes. The dominant orthodoxies were always dividing people between narrow domestic walls.

The great saints and reformers of all times, from the Buddha downwards, made it their chief mission to preach unity and to integrate the various communities. And the deeper traditions of the main religions had built an inner pervasive unity for more than two

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thousand years.

Also, as has been obvious from the historical background presented in the beginning of this book, despite the three or four waves of political unity, imposed by Ashoka Maurya, the Guptas, Akbar and the British, it was the small state-mindedness of the many Indian princes and their feudal oligarchies that led to weakness, division and defeat.

Only in the freedom movement, which started against the most comprehensive invasion by the British, did a sense of togetherness arise; which, ultimately, succeeded under the cementing genius of Gandhi, in bringing integration among the people for a brief period, specially among the Western-educated Indian intelligentsia.

Now one of the concepts which helped to give a strong base to the national movement was the doctrine of synthesis put forward by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and later by Jawaharlal Nehru. They have all believed that modern India would benefit from the belief in the sanctity of the individual conscience that had survived in the best minds of the past. Also, they have hoped that the learning of Europe would strengthen the belief in the sovereign individual. And that the wisdom of India, as well as the contemporary anarchist emphasis on the development of the individual, would give the necessary strength of character, which would make human beings resilient against all coming disasters. They declared the doctrine of unity in diversity. And they sought sanctions for this in the age-old land system. They have all pointed to the basic democracy of the

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village Republic, its self-government and its resilience (until the frontal assault of the British capitalist individualism) as the best safeguard against the onslaught of the king's power. In fact they demanded integrated education as the instrument for the perfection of human beings and the struggle against inequality of opportunity and for creative unity among the various castes, communities and factions.

On the other hand, the petty politicians, who accepted nationalism as it was practised by many of the Imperialist European nations, were unconsciously asking India to imitate the behaviour of the Western nation-states. These people wanted India to be just like any other European nation-state, building on the capitalist profit system, the sense of glory and power and individual self-aggrandisement. They probably wanted to impose conformity of thought on the population as some of the European leaders had done. They did not see that the logical development of the nation-state in Europe, built on the cash-nexus, was Imperialism, which transferred the burden of exploitation from the home country to the colonies and spheres of influence. They were blissfully unconscious that from the selfishness, greed and power impulses of the Imperialist nation-states grew Fascism.

Many of the Indian merchants, turned would-be capitalists, had already begun to emigrate and exploit Africa and other underdeveloped countries of Asia. And at home they had begun to oppress the industrial workers on the parallel of the Japanese capitalists and the *Samurai*.

The great and noble ideals of the liberation move-

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ment in India were fortunately evolved by an intelligentsia, which was against national chauvinism and for which the urge for national freedom was a prelude to the economic freedom of the people of our country. But the mercantile classes were promoting the acquisitive mentality among the lower middle class and demanded the gains of victory as soon as the freedom struggle had been won. The fact that these sections mostly belonged to the giant Hindu majority brought no securities to the minorities.

The concept of a co-operative Commonwealth, in which the millions of Indian people would grow to real freedom, with equality of opportunity and socialism as the goal, therefore, came face to face with the concept of the nation-state.

When socialism was put before the people, as the main goal, the acquisitive minded classes began, from the point of view of their petty gains, to encourage not the nation-state idea (because they were ill-equipped to harbour such ambitions), but small-state-mindedness, achieving their putrid ends through communal bickerings, casteist factionalism, linguistic snobbery and the meanest squabbles about the loaves and fishes of office.

'The revolution was national in the fullest sense of the word', Jawaharlal Nehru has said, 'shaking the whole land and taking all the people with it forward to freedom'. But, after its realisation, the revolutionary ideals were forgotten, in the attempts, even of the followers of Gandhi, to win the economic gains of victory for themselves and the five thousand families. The concept of economic freedom, or the 'Socialist

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Pattern ' of society, as the central objective of Government, has thus been somewhat perverted by reaction from the start.

If this concept of Socialism could be kept in view all the time, the fissiparous tendencies would soon disappear. For deep underneath the mass discontent and chaos are the pulls for higher wages, more food, more water, electric power and giant plants of the Five-Year Plans. At the moment, if one part of the country is found suitable either geographically or for other social considerations, then the others feel they are being discriminated against. The emphasis on social justice would help to dissolve the local doubts and fears. And a certain amount of social efficiency may seem like a limitation of freedom, but would ultimately result in a more genuine freedom, because it would bring greater equality all round.

Mr. Nehru sees hope in the basic village democracy, which has been recently initiated through the councils, called Panchayats. If this had been thought out earlier, then the parliamentary democracy at the top, which expressed the interests of lower middle class and middle class only, might have had a strong peasant base. The benefits of planning would have gone right down and the vital reorganisation of the country would have begun from the healthy new shoots. In that way the district boards, municipal committees, state councils and Central Parliament, would have received fresh blood; and the whole fabric of economic development would have gone hand in hand with political democracy.

As it is, the problem of unity still remains a vague

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hope. Of course, unity and integration cannot be imposed. But the growth of these processes can be accelerated immediately, by emphasis on economic equality on the one hand and by a new kind of education on the other, both of which factors have not yet received enough attention from the Government in spite of the directives of the Prime Minister.

The Hiatus in Planning.

The second adverse factor in the building up of our new pattern (implicit in the first) lies in the formidable difficulties of economic reconstruction of our country, in a manner commensurate with our vast needs.

In this context, what, in brief, is the actual economic situation of our country?

In one phrase the answer is that we are engaged in the attempt at sheer physical survival, even though we have gone forward in many sectors of our economy and the death rate has fallen since the British left India.

During the last years of the Second Five-Year Plan, one of the Presidents of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Dheber, gave some rough figures in his presidential address, which may be cited as almost official data.

The appalling truth of these statistics must be accepted:

(1) There are about two hundred million of the four hundred million people in India who work only five months in a year, perhaps due to land operations being limited to one harvest on account of inaccessi-

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bility of water or difficulties of terrain.

(2) There are about anything from thirty to fifty million people who are totally unemployed, of which twenty million are field labourers, about eleven million being the lower middle class intelligentsia. There are fourteen thousand children born everyday, four thousands deaths per day, resulting in a gain of ten thousand new mouths to feed, making up our total population 436 millions according to the census of 1961.

(3) The food deficit of about twenty per cent in the Second Five-Year Plan period has not yet been wiped out.

(4) The targets of the Second Five-Year Plan for industrial development brought India's income to 42% per capita. Unfortunately, this got lost somewhere, because the actual income of the people did not show a rise. Since then we wish to appoint a commission to find out what happened to this increase.

(5) The price level has not been maintained; the cost of living has gone up by nearly 500% since 1948, while wages have remained more or less at the old levels; and the taxation of various commodities which are basic necessities has lowered the standards of the middle class, the lower middle class, the workers, and the peasantry, while the very rich have grown richer. And, of course, there has been no attempt at fixing a national minimum wage, old age pensions, or adequate social and health insurance.

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The situation revealed by these figures would be very dark if we do not bear in mind, that, relatively speaking, we have gone beyond the sluggishness of the British *laissez faire* period throughout the national plans. And we have certainly given a positive direction to our economic advance. But the progress has been slow and India has certainly not turned the corner from grim poverty to anywhere near the affluent society, though the upper classes live in the fond belief that they live and move and have their being in America or Great Britain.

The guiding hand of Mr. Nehru and the National Development Council offer the hope that the Third Five-Year Plan may be crucial in rescuing India from near breakdown to something like balance. The presence of the four steel plants in the public sector, the five big dams, and the rise in production in certain areas of our industries, shows what Mr. Nehru calls, 'a perceptible advance'.

It is doubtful, however, whether, as Mr. Morarji Desai, the Finance Minister asserts, that we have gone from a 'static', to a 'dynamic' economy.

The paradox of the building of a socialist society, and the completion of the half-finished social economic revolution, in spite of the wide margin given to the selfish aims of the recalcitrant private sector, stares us in the face, because, while the targets of our planning are designed modestly enough to keep the people going, the acquisitive minded in our country emphasise private gain, work against the public sector and unconsciously tend to sabotage our efforts at the wellbeing of all through prejudice in favour of the security of

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the few.

Thus while there is progress, it is not rapid enough for lack of a dynamic among the whole people. Also, importantly, the advance from the abjectly low level of existence forward to a tolerable life, is frustrated by the growth of population, far in excess of the achievements of the planned economy. As the anticipated increase of population, according to present figures, is estimated at ten million a year, and we can keep the balance only if we create four to five million jobs, very little relief from a rise in income can be expected within the next twenty years.

Unfortunately, the partial success so far achieved has been rendered possible by enormous foreign aid. About thirty per cent of the investment of certain plants came from abroad and from our own accumulation of sterling balances. Our domestic resources could not be relied upon to provide even twenty per cent investment in the past. And if domestic investment of about twenty per cent is not achieved, as also a rate of production growth of seven to eight per cent, which would double the present rate, then the ghosts of generations of new Indians will continue to hover across the horizon. The efficient use of foreign aid may accelerate our economic expansion, but much more depends on bridging the gap between the admirable theoretical planning and the practical execution of the schemes put forward.

As the growth of population is particularly marked in the rural areas, and some of this can be offset by increased production of food, the problem of the land becomes immediate. First of all, the unemployed

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field labourers will need to be given land. The under-employed rural population will need water, cheap fertilisers, working service co-operatives, so that the present antiquated modes of production can be changed. The partial success of community development gives some hope, but it will have to be more energetically pursued with the help of a voluntary land army recruited from among the unemployed and the students during their vacations. The stability of agricultural prices will have to be guaranteed against the present uncertainties. The establishment of buffer stocks has already helped to stabilise the price level, but the hoarders and black marketeers need to be vigilantly watched if all these measures are to yield results, because of the heavy indebtedness of the peasantry to the money lenders in almost all parts of India.

As the execution of the plan is mainly in the hands of an inefficient, uninspired and almost heartless bureaucracy, the administration of the public sector will have to be cleaned up and new trained cadres provided to raise the small percentage of total production in this public sector, at a rapid rate, otherwise it cannot contribute enough to the expansion of investment.

The increase of exports over imports alone could bring the necessary money to buy the extra machinery. And this has not been realised by the feudal mercantile classes, who often do not sell according to sample and thus bring the country's prestige down in the foreign markets, apart, of course, from the Western step-motherly attitude to Indian exports.

The question of growing monopolies, and undue concentration of economic wealth in the hands of the

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few, has to be checked directly by regulation and not merely by the growth of small scale-industries, which may be expected to limit the power of monopolies or increase employment, but cannot take the economy forward.

Futhermore, the income of the upper middle classes, which has been increased vastly, can yield taxation, if the consumption of capital gains and high incomes can be taxed, the wealth tax restored, and evasion of taxes stopped.

In so far as the economic reconstruction of India seems to be implicit in the Five-Year Plan economy, the fact of political unity also depends, importantly, on the development of economy. And each area becomes dependent on the other, with the whole country, acting as a common market or economic bloc. This demands the spread of knowledge of the new Industrial Revolution among the poorer sections, so that by the awareness of improved agrarian and scientific techniques, they can grow into the changed world where sectionalism, superstition, and other such mental and social bad habits, may disappear in favour of a secular humanist outlook.

In fact, the present crucial situation demands the utmost out of the people, great leadership and intense devotion of the kind that Mahatma Gandhi brought to the struggle for political freedom. Only a Government of national unity, fighting the *emergency* on the basis of the war against poverty, can really produce the necessary dynamic to turn the corner, without violence or disruption. And the ruling intelligentsia will have to learn the 'gospel of dirty hands' and

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actually do the constructive work, before the people, specially the peasantry, will move forward.

And only by emphasis on the social and economic base of our peace policies, can these ideas have the chance to persuade foreign powers to give up the compulsions of force and divert the energies towards building a co-operative commonwealth of mankind.

POSITIVE FACTORS. The positive gains of planned economy and the negative factors are noted below, from the findings of the Planning Commission.

Since the inauguration of the Five-Year Plan in 1951 the national income has risen by about 40 per cent which means 35 per cent per year.

The production of food grains has risen from 50 to 75 million tons.

The industrial output has increased by 50 per cent except in cotton and jute.

Coal production has increased from 32 to 53 million tons.

Pig iron production has increased from 1·6 to 3·4 million tons.

The production of steel has increased from 1·4 to 3 million tons.

The production of fertilisers has increased seven fold.

The production of bicycles has gone up ten fold.

The number of small-scale industries has risen substantially.

The rate of new investment, which was below 5

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per cent of the national income in 1950 has risen to 11 per cent at the end of the Second Plan and will be 14 per cent by the end of the Third Plan.

NEGATIVE FACTORS. The population growth has risen by an annual figure of ten million and will have increased by eighty millions in 1961, so that five million new jobs will have to be created every year to keep some balance.

The present rate of capital investment is below par and will have to be boosted to twenty per cent of the national income, if the present poverty is not to remain a permanent feature.

Prices have risen beyond wages, and the need for price control has not been attended to, nor is there any attempt at a national minimum wage.

Contribution of direct taxes to national efforts is about three per cent, total taxation being hardly ten per cent of the national income. And while the taxation of lower middle class and middle class groups has risen, those who enjoyed capital gains and high incomes have not been taxed out of their extra gains or punished for evading taxes.

SOCIAL AND MENTAL BAD HABITS. The third adverse factor includes many miscellaneous details, which may be described as our social and mental bad habits that have arisen mainly from the long eras of feudalism and alien rule. No amount of sermonising will remove them. Only education of the new generations may change these bad habits. They are mentioned here in the effort to explain our

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shortcomings rather than in the spirit of belittling our people.

In spite of the recent legislation against untouchability, the *Varnadharma* postulate of the conservative Swatantra party still implies retention of caste as the social basis of Hinduism. The Gandhian method of destroying caste by attacking untouchability, though extremely subtle, was too inoffensive to destroy it. The new laws allowing entry to outcastes in the Hindu temples have not met with much success, in spite of the heavy penalties imposed on the non-observers of the measures. For instance, when the untouchables entered the Vishwanatha Temple in Benaras, the Brahmins just left that temple and built another a little way away, because the old temple had been polluted. In a village, about thirty miles from Delhi, the whole untouchable population was turned out of their hutments by the caste Hindus, without even so much as a murmur among the law givers. In the whole of South India, the caste complex is still a rigid framework of awkward human relations and the Brahmin anti-Brahmin struggle is only a surface indication of the profound orthodoxies at work in Maharashtra.

Perhaps, as Mr. K. M. Panikker has said, it was the martyrdom of Gandhi, and the shock it administered, which really proved to be the turning point from the strongly held idea of reviving the Hindu state, with the caste system entire, to the concept of a secular state. But even so there are elements in our country who wish to counter the theocratic state of Pakistan with a more rigid theocratic state of Hindustan.

Also, there are certain reactionary elements among

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the big capitalists, who would like to use Hindu orthodoxy, in co-operation with the army to set up a neo-fascist Hindu state, based on the perverted use of the idea of *Dharma*. The minorities, though protected by the law, as I have stated above, still feel insecure in regard to avenues of employment and equal citizenship.

The concept of nonviolence was believed in action to a large extent by Gandhi and seems to have died with him. The Mahatma took it from the Jain teachings, which have regarded nonviolence as the highest religion. *Ahimsa* or nonviolence, in this faith, signified the withering away of attachment and other passions. Their appearance was considered as *Himsa*. In this noble form, it is doubtful if it has ever been practised in India by more than a few people, except in the form of cowardice. For it entailed the conquest of one's passions, vice, pride, lust, vanity, anger, greed and ambition. And even one of these besetting weaknesses made for *Himsa*. The stresses of the feudal society had led to extreme violence in all its forms. The poet Tagore, as we have seen, once chided Gandhi for wrongly believing that the sanction of nonviolence could bind many people. And the poet was proved right because Mahatma Gandhi withdrew his nonviolent campaigns every time he launched them. Perhaps, it can be said, that the followers of Gandhi learned to take body blows from the British police and army without hitting back. Otherwise, as everywhere else in the world, so in India, the ideals have remained theoretical. At the moment, there is a growing denial of the spirit of nonviolence, even among

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the remaining followers of Gandhi; some of the most devoted ones among them have used the coercion of law to impose prohibition and have opened fire on unarmed followers of opposite political parties. The linguistic riots have shown widespread civic violence. The business life of hard boiled Indian merchants in the big cities of India, expresses the violence of the upper orders almost in the form in which the Japanese capitalists crushed millions of workers in the sweat shops for three generations. The attitude of the high castes and upper classes is relentlessly violent in thought if not in deed. And the followers of various creeds display all the signs of aggressiveness born of age-old orthodoxies. Sex suppression and prohibition has meant colossal increase in crime. Only the national and international peace policies of Jawaharlal Nehru seem to keep these myriad expressions of frailty and falsehood and anger in control. And, as compared to other peoples in the world, we can enjoy the negative virtue of not being highly armed.

The memories of the murders during the partition, as well as after, leave no room for complacency. They should remind the sensitive and the enlightened, that in moments of exacerbation, Indians are likely to fight each other and shed blood, as wantonly as any other people.

Again, Mr. Nehru's policy of non-alignment to keep the cold war out of India, has helped to prevent the Indians from participating in the kind of attitude of bitterness, hostility and resentment, which the states of Europe and America seem to harbour against each other. It is surprising, that the policy of our Govern-

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ment succeeded in this regard, although the real effects of a repressive, patriarchal society, such as ours, had actually stimulated violence, even on the birth of freedom. The only hope of maintaining our international policy lies in the capacity of our future Governments to maintain non-alignment abroad and encourage genuine nonviolence at home until it becomes a habit of the multitude.

Also, it may be pointed out that the constant equivocation between the aspirations towards *Dharma*, of the conservative political parties, and the working out of its obligations in actual fact, is highly deceptive. Mr. Rajagopalachari, for instance, and his colleagues, often talk of *Dharma* while exalting the habits of an acquisitive society. This leads to the practice of many bad habits, which are neither permitted by the old culture, nor preferred by those who respect the principles of a new humanist life-view.

One of the most important examples of hypocrisy in this matter is the question of cow killing. After the Vedic Aryan period, during which the cow, especially the calf, had been eaten with great relish, there arose a tenderness for the milk-giving cattle. And later, killing of the cow became a crime in Hindu society. Today, while worshipping the cow, the average Hindu will leave the cattle to die unfed, without any stirring of conscience. The draining of the cattle wealth of the country, by allowing the enfeeblement of the cattle, through exaggerated sentimentality, may portend a national disaster, but reactionary opinion is unable to see the cruelty of maintaining sick cattle, thus depriving many human beings of

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food and being untrue to both their real *Dharma* as well as to the secular state.

The concept of Truth, which was the core of Gandhism, seems to have lapsed, except in the lives of a few devout followers, in the corruption of the tycoons and profit-makers and opportunist political leaders, as everywhere in the West.

On the other hand, in spite of the fact that they know this, many intellectuals still deliberately equate the whole of Indian thought with spirituality, and the whole of Western behaviour with materialism. Under British rule, it had become a national habit to find compensation for our paucities as against the mundane sensationalism of the West and its hankering after worldly goods. As we have still not acquired many worldly goods, the cliché about Indian spirituality is often used. The only sanction for this is: that a good many literate people repeat prayers in languages they do not understand, practise ritualistic *pujapath*, like the people who go to church on Sundays in the West, but still boast about spirituality. The boasts about spirituality would not be so embarrassing, but they stand in the way of social development, in so far as they generate prejudices and sentiments which cannot stand the tests of accepted human values and rational analysis. And they prevent the new religion of man from emerging through the morass of ignorance and superstition.

One of the more humorous little failings of middle class India is the indulgence in astrology. The opening of any public institution is determined by the astrologer; almost every film company keeps one or the other of these busybodies working out horoscopes;

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and the rich retain personal astrologers even as they maintain expensive dogs; and quite a few educated people will go to an illiterate priest before undertaking an air journey. This kind of belief in ' what the stars foretell ' is, of course, a constant feature even in the more scientific West. But Mr. Naylor's predictions in the newspapers are more often treated as jokes in other countries, but they seem to be taken literally by otherwise intelligent businessmen in India. This may be an indication of the profound Indian mind, which still leaves many aspects of human life to the unresolved worlds of spiritual experience. But, somehow, it encourages the idea of the average Indian as a transcendentalist, nobly occupied with the salvation of his soul, when, in actual fact, the very opposite is true of many people. For, in reality, even the superstitious peasant of today proves to be a practical man of the world: at nightfall, when he sits round to smoke a *hukah* with his companions, he talks not so often of the supreme God but of the dire needs of his body, of the prices in the market, the prospects of the harvest, the cruelty of the officials, money lenders, landlords and the police. The lower middle classes, with their superficial acquaintance with modern gadgets and their false pride and respectability, begin to exhibit the same dual allegiance to God and Mammon, as their Western counterparts, only in more ridiculous forms. The upper orders arising from the crest of an early capitalism, whose progress is being indifferently arrested by the planned economy, have, unconsciously, resurrected the most despised of the Indian gods, Kubera, with his round belly and

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put him on the highest pedestals, while they pay lip service to the higher gods before going to work.

The upper rank of the populations of the four major cities, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi, therefore offers a spectacle of imitationism, commercialism, corruption and vulgarity which is the most sickening feature of our present malaise. The most superficial customs of the West, like cabaret, gambling on cards and horses, speculation on the stock exchange, flourish, while a few millions lie on the pavements in each city because they have nowhere to rest their heads. The corruption may be due to the amount of black money which has come into circulation. The false sense of prosperity that was created among a number of people during the Second World War has survived. The presence of a few rich millowners and businessmen, and film stars with showy American cars, and cheap women's magazines to boost them gives a picture which is entirely out of focus, as the contrast with *jupda* hutments, running open sewers, litter-ridden streets and pestering beggars, brings home the real truth about ourselves. Only a very few men and women of the richer classes, or the middle sections, seem to give a thought to the lives of the poor who live not far away from them. As for the villagers, they seem farther away from the cities and small towns than London, Paris and New York, because the Boeing jet constellations fly to capacity from the aerodromes.

In such a society the acceptance of illegal gratification, bribery and corruption, became a natural phenomenon.

The introduction of prohibition, over certain areas, in the misguided zeal of the pure to practise some of

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the teachings of Gandhi, has brought about a vast network of illicit distillation, with its attendant social degradations, gambling, prostitution, juvenile criminality, decay and physical death. And yet the so-called honest protagonists of prohibition persist, dishonestly, in the refusal to face the facts they know about in their consciences.

These and other bad mental and social habits, may be transitional, but they have to go if we are to create a new society with any grace, with our unique contribution of goodwill for mankind as a whole.

Survival

The picture of India in the minds of most outsiders is that of the eighty per cent peasant population, working hard to survive in the seven hundred thousand or more villages.

Actually, the features which excite the sensibility when one looks at the multi-coloured image of India are, apart from the seven thousand villages in slow movement, the big dams which have already begun to provide water and electric power to vast areas; steel plants, which are going up in different parts of the country; a few of the community development schemes and extension services which have begun to transform the lives of the villagers; the determination to encourage handlooms and handicrafts to keep the craftsmen from the degradation of poverty and frustration of his creativity; the will to use atomic energy for peaceful reconstruction; and, above all, the policy of co-existence which has been urged from

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the highest platforms in India. The last value seems, to some extent, to have led to the stabilisation of those forces in the world that are against war, both hot and cold, and which may succeed in maintaining the world balance. And, perhaps, India may play some part in bringing about disarmament, which will literally bring hope of life to millions of innocent people.

Also, if one travels to various countries of the world it is likely that one might be struck by the great talents of the Indian people, also their comparative ignorance of world forces in disruption and deadlock and their comparative lack of that wild fanaticism for war in a hate-ridden world.

I would like to recall that having lived in Europe for over a generation between two world wars, and having visited the West again and again during the last fifteen years, I have felt the intensification of aggressiveness, delinquency and of the peculiar neuroses of bitterness and hatred in the prosperous West, from which I have always returned to India with a kind of nostalgia, which is not so much the wish for home as a quest for comparative calm in the world of irritation, fear and anger. Perhaps, the adventure of seeing India building up from the 4th century and the 18th to 20th century, in spite of tremendous difficulties and setbacks draws one back. But, perhaps one comes running back through disgust against the drift of the Western European countries from the concept of the welfare state, the sensation mongering of the Western and American press, and of the other media of mass communication, the commercialisation of advertising as well as of literature and art, through the horror,

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crime and sex books, and the still dormant attitude of racial and Imperial arrogance against Asian and African peoples in Europe.

It is likely that those of us in India, who are still in touch with the small agro-industrial village societies, which live in a certain harmony with nature, recline back to this even static society, and wish to look at the gift horse of the high-pressure, profit-centred, Western industrial revolution in the mouth before accepting it wholesale. In spite of the penalties of a slower adjustment, it is important to use science rather than be used by it. And socialism, or mutual aid, is a better foundation for the start of our new history than the money-grabbing, aggressive capitalist state which becomes inevitably chauvinist and Imperialist and generates the values of the 'bitch goddess success' against the mutual confidence among men, co-operation, respect and the sharing of burdens together. These latter were the hallmark of our earliest primitive village republics, through which some part of our civilisation lasted, in spite of the rapacities of feudalism and the terrible impact of the West. And if we do not renovate these values as integral parts of our 'Socialist Pattern', our society will share the same death throes as the exploiting civilisation forced upon us.

For, if civilisation is to mean the breakdown of the organic life of the community, the disturbance of man's creative relation to his daily tasks, and appointment of money as the only reward for labour, then the building up of large fortunes, social prestige and gigantic political power begins to take precedence over all deeply human aims, such as the making of beautiful

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things, of the poetic sensibility of man, and of a culture which is capable of renewal through constant search and questioning. Through the historical periods, man has tended to make useful things with the highest skill, so that they often give pleasure to look at. The whole integrity of human beings depends on the fact that they give the best hours and the most intense energy to their daily labour. In fact, never has the mind and soul of man been known to grow, except through creative expression. And we probably know much more about those eras of the past of which work in clay, fibre, bronze, paint and words has survived, because the various qualities of workmanship reveal the quality of the minds of those civilisations which produced them.

Thus, if the contemporary civilisation we hope to build, avoids the pitfalls of the Western industrial civilisation, it may be worthwhile taking some of its techniques, without borrowing the profit system behind it. For the exaltation of a managerial class and a few ' back room boys ', and the reduction of the great body of workers to varying degrees of repetitive labour, will lead to a civilisation which, like its Western counterpart, is the antithesis of a creative civilisation.

In this context, India could become a kind of laboratory for the experiment of building a new kind of human society. The seven hundred thousand villages could become the nuclei of the co-operative commonwealth we have always talked about. The basic Panchayat democracy could decentralise power and gear the production of food and daily wants to self-sufficiency. The improvement of communications

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would bind one village to the other and to the dispersed towns, built in the heart of nature, and such household things as are not produced in the village could be secured from small-scale industries, through a barter economy. The basic democracies could regulate their own growth and promote self-government in order, ultimately, to abolish the power politician. These integrated, self-governing communities could elect District Councils of fifteen or twenty similar communities, and achieve a much higher self-sufficiency by dovetailing old industries. The vital problem of adjustment and grievances, from the village level to the district, would create lively democratic struggles. And these would be reflected in the regional councils, legislatures and central parliament. Thus the all-powerful State at the centre would begin 'to wither away'. And the filthy, money-grabbing possessiveness of the upper and middle classes could be liquidated by taxing out the monopolists and by the distribution of wealth all around. The shifting of emphasis from property and possession to mutual aid would release the kind of aspirations, enthusiasms and values that a creative society lives upon if it is building together through communities, rather than through individualist megalomaniacs and egocentric dictators, who never allow the potentialities of other human beings to be realised. Self-giving would replace saving oneself: the living impulses would replace the forces of death—the inhibitions, prohibitions and frustrations of unused natural talents in men and women. And people would come to the top not because of wealth but through their ability

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to surpass each other, in healthy competition in the arts and skills which make men truly human.

We in India have constantly felt, during the years of the liberation struggle, that the ultimate aim of society is to make individuals, who might live with some sense of harmony, among their own groups, and among the bigger groups in the modern states and supra states of the emerging One World.

The struggle to create such individuals has, I suppose, been the main achievement of many human cultures. And the forces of history, which have been working in various parts of the world, have, indeed, given to the modern age many men and women, who have led the world to the stage when, with the unbounded knowledge available, humanity can avoid nuclear war and usher in the genuine hope of a good life for all mankind and of international friendship. This direction seems to be blurred everywhere, however, by a certain lack of emphasis on the value of the 'whole man' as the goal of civilisation, through the insistence on specialist knowledge, bifurcated in partisan truth, in which suburban outlooks and almost tribalist passions hold sway. The principles of the evolutionary growth of the human personality through the ever widening and ever deepening processes and aspirations of culture, seem to be forgotten in sectional, national-chauvinist and cold war achievements.

On the other hand, since the survival of India makes it necessary for it not to become an Imperialist nation, it may contribute a will for peace, as well as for some balance and calm in internal reconstruction, which may help humanity in a very small way, to tilt

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the balance in favour of the continuance of the human race at a possible human level.

If then the direction of the tentative Contemporary Indian Civilisation, aspiring to peace and deeply human values, can be maintained, the enlightened people everywhere may recognise their twin brothers among those Indians who are struggling to keep a few lamps of the human spirit alight in the enveloping darkness of our time.

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POSTSCRIPT

SINCE THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN, THE FUNDAmental doctrine of the five principles, elaborated by Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou-en-lai, has been negated, in practice, by the Government of the People's Republic of China, through its deliberate, cold-blooded and massive invasion of India.

The policy of non-alignment, which was the basic approach of our government to the two military blocs, is threatened, because of India's need for large-scale aid in defensive weapons. The whole concept of dynamic neutrality, professed by various Asian and African States, has been dealt a severe blow by Li Shao Chi.

Mr. Nehru has, however, sought to maintain non-alignment as the cornerstone of India's approach to the blocs, in spite of the betrayal by China of the principles it has solemnly agreed to observe. During his speech in the Indian Parliament on November 8, '62, he said:

> 'This help, that is given to us, is unconditional and without any strings. It does not affect directly our policy of non-alignment which we value. The countries which have helped us have themselves recognised this and made it clear that they do not expect us to leave that policy.'

I am not sure to what extent the forces that stand for war, will not seek to attach some strings to their aid, in spite of the general wish of both the blocs to preserve

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the non-alignment of our country. They know that if India is drawn into the orbit of the cold war, it might make the launching of the third world war by one side or the other almost inevitable.

The balance between the irrational elements, who fish in troubled waters, and the saner peoples who wish to avoid a major catastrophe, has to be kept, with a good deal of vigilance, against jingoism at home and cold war strategy abroad.

Meanwhile, those people in the outside world who accuse India of inconsistency, because it defends its interest by military means, in spite of the reluctance of its leadership to use armed might anywhere, may take to heart the casual aside of N. S. Khrushchev, on the necessity for defence against aggression in his letter of 24th October, 1962:

> 'It is well known that if one tries to mollify a robber by giving him at first one's purse, then one's coat, etc., the robber will not become more merciful, will not stop robbing. On the contrary, he will become increasingly insolent. Therefore, it is necessary to curb the highwayman in order to prevent the jungle law from becoming the law governing relations between civilised people and states'.

I hope that Mr. Khrushchev will himself remember these words in dealing with his recalcitrant 'comrades' in China, and will condemn the unabashed invasion of India by the troops of the People's Republic of China, across both the northern and eastern frontiers of our country.

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If some States break international law, make alliances by destroying principles, and become opportunist in the lust for self-aggrandisement, that does not mean the Indian people should give up their sincere beliefs in world peace, in the necessity of disarmament, the banning of nuclear tests, the settlement of disputes through negotiations and the reconstruction of the world through the co-existence of States with different ideologies.

The attitude of our people in the national crisis has justified the hope that our government will not allow the reactionary chauvinist elements in this country, and their friends abroad, to break the unity of the most conscious intelligentsia with the under-privileged sections, who have contributed so generously to the defence.

Our war effort, it has to be remembered, is only an effort to secure the peace without dishonour, in order to pursue the more terrible war against poverty, backwardness and daily humiliation, faced by our population since the denuding of our resources by our erstwhile exploiters, oppressors and denigrators.

And in the twin tasks of the defence of our territories, and the reconstruction of our social and economic life, the resilient values put forward by Jawaharlal Nehru will remain the cornerstones of our policies.

Poetry and courage are the ethos of our efforts to build the tentative hypothesis of a new contemporary Indian civilisation.

M. R. A.

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DR. MULK RAJ ANAND is one of India's leading thinkers, novelists and art critics. He was born in Peshawar in 1905.

After a brilliant academic career in the Punjab University, Dr. Anand studied under Professor G. Dawes Hicks at the Universities of London and Cambridge and took a Doctorate in Philosophy. Later he set out to study various aspects of the contemporary Asiatic renaissance with a view to integrating the theories behind it with his experience of Europe. He has travelled widely throughout the world and worked for the synthesis of a new Indian civilisation with the most dynamic values of the West.

He has been Editor of *Marg*, a quarterly devoted to art in all its aspects, ever since the magazine was founded. His publications, besides his numerous novels of Indian life and volumes of short stories, include *Apology for Heroism*, *Lines written to An Indian Air*, *Homage to Tagore* etc.

He now occupies the Tagore Chair of Art in the University of Punjab.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

CHARLES FABRI

THE BOOK presents the fascinating picture of the changing pattern of Indian architecture from the earliest Buddhist structures to the magnificent caves, from the first attempt at temple building to the gigantic gopuras of the South and the masterpieces of Indo-Islamic building. Beautifully illustrated with thirty-four photographs, the book traces the grandeur of ancient Indian architecture, the influence on it of Islamic architecture and its meeting with Western architecture.

Specially prepared for the layman who seeks to explore this great heritage of India, the book avoids tiresome enumerations and difficult technicalities and aims at inculcating love for an aesthetic enjoyment of Indian architecture by describing its natural growth and good sense. One of the valuable features of the book is an illustrated glossary of Indian architectural terms.

Dr. Fabri, a resident in India for the last twenty-eight years, has been a guest lecturer at many Universities in India and Europe. A regular contributor to leading journals he is the author of the following books : *The Stone Age* ; *Indian Flamingo* ; *A History of Indian Dress* ; *A History of Indian Architecture* (in press) ; *A Fundamental History of Indian Art* (in press) ; and *Khajuraho* (with Stella Kramrisch and Mulk Raj Anand). His book *An Introduction to European Painting* is in press and will be published by Asia Publishing House.

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IS THERE A CONTEMPORARY INDIAN CIVILISATION ? AN

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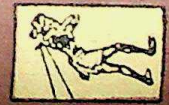

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